IMAGE OF INDIA IN THE WORKS OF V S NAIPAUL

(Final Thesis submitted to The Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University, Hampi, For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Literature)

Researcher

T.H.Basavaraj

Research Guide

Dr Karigowda Beechanahalli

Emeritus Professor

Department of Translation Studies

Department of Translation Studies

Faculty of Language

Kannada University, Hampi

Vidyaranya -583276

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Declaration

I hereby declared that this thesis entitled **Image of India in the works of V S Naipaul,** is an independent work based on research undertaken by me under the supervision of **Dr. Karigowda Beechanahalli,** Emeritus Professor, Department of Translation Studies, Kannada University, Hampi and has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other university or Institution for the award of any research degree.

Research Scholar

T.H.Basavaraj
Research Student
Department of Translation Studies
Kannada University, Hampi
Vidyaranya 583 276

Date: 31.07.2017
Place: ವಿದ್ಯಾರಣ್ಯ

Certificate

This is to Certify that the thesis entitled **Image of India in the works of V S Naipaul** submitted by Basavaraj T.H. is an origonal work of research carried out by him under my supervision. The thesis or a part thereof, has not been submitted hitherto any other University or Institution for the Award of any degree or diploma. I recommend the thesis for the submission for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Department of Translation Studies in the Faculty of Language from Kannada University, Hampi

Research Guide

Dr. Karigowda Beechanahalli,

Emeritus Professor

Department of Translation Studies

Place:

Date: 31/7/2017

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Chapter : One

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction.

1.2. Objectives of the Study.

1.3. Methodology.

1.4. A Brief Introduction to the Life and Works of V.S Naipaul.

Chapter: One

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION TO V.S. NAIPAUL

"I came to INDIA first because of curiosity about my ancestral land. My publisher had agreed to pay me an advance for anything I would write on INDIA. Although it was a petty amount even then I felt at peace to get it. I don't know how to move in India but eventually I had to find my way... The only Hindi word my mother carried from India was 'beta' and she said 'beta please leave India to the Indians".[1]

V S Naipaul a noble laureate is regarded as the best living writer in the world writing in English. He is indeed a complex writer and his works have been variously interpreted by the critics. The present study makes an enquiry into V S Naipaul's image of his home land, 'India', that he portrays artistically through both his fiction and nonfiction, as an experimental recreation of the writer. If we choose to think of India as more than the location of some of his works, and as a necessary part of his imagination, it is because three of his major travelogues have been located in India and his masterpiece novel *A House for Mr.Biswas* , if (though) not located in India still shares Indian location. He has made several visits to India, but for the first time in 1962, second time in 1976 and third visit in 1989 are significant as each of these three visits was followed by a book on Indian Civilization.

In the early days of VS Naipaul's writing career, he was every much looked at as a commonwealth writer mostly because of his tone. As commonwealth literature means the conglomeration of literatures written in the languages of the commonwealth countries. The Queen of England, as the Head of the common wealth in her Commonwealth Day message on 10th June, 1967, described common wealth as being "made up of a group of heterogeneous nations widely dissimilar in race, religion and culture, and in population and economic strength... in this very diversity He the value and justification of the association based on a custom of discussion and consultation, a habit made easier by a tradition of acquaintanceship and the use of the English language.[2]

One is concerned with writing in English out side Britain, i.e. in the countries like India, Africa, West India, Australia, New Zealand etc. In these countries commonwealth literature itself has become increasingly complex and of metaphysical conception. The term broadly covers the diverse kinds of writing in English in these countries with all sorts of individual, cultural and national contrasts acknowledged that, the common factors of colonial experience and the transplantation of English culture and traditions. The creative writings of these countries evidently exhibit the amazing capacity of the English language to express a wide range of 'expatriate sensibility.

The attitudes of commonwealth writers towards their common colonizer are nearly as many varieties as there are writers. Although the colonial burden is one of the experiences, the expatriate sensibility is seen in all the forms of literature that they produce, whether it be poetry, fiction, short – story, memoir, play, journalistic writing, dairy, travelogue etc.

The emphasis may be on the class distinction as it is in the writings of Katherine Mansfield, a short story writer from New Zealand, on race or colour or caste as it may be seen in the works of African novelist Chinua Achebe, on the incongruities of the colonial life resulting from the social problems as it

can be seen in the psycho-analytical novels of Patrick white, an Australian novelist. Protest, rage, satire, aggressive exposure, root lessness, identity crisis, sense of non-belonging are the themes common in the works of VS Naipaul.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

A group of writers of the first rate, who have been internationally acclaimed, viz., Nirad C Chandhuri, EM Foster, Vikram Seth, Ved Mehata, R K Narayan, Ruth Prawar Jhabwala, Jumpa Lahiri, Raja Rao, VS Naipaul and so many other writers have brought to the forefront the third world reality in India and its society with all its lineaments, cultural and historical. VS Naipaul, has done this job more remarkably, extensively and lucidly with his lives bulk of nonfictions and fictions. The 'image of India' that he presents through his books on India which minutely scrutinize culture and civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, as that complex whole which includes knowledge, behalfs, arts morals, laws, customers etc., So a study of V S Naipaul's 'image of India', is much more relevant to understand the factual 'image of India' along with the understanding of the prevalent cultural and socio- historical conditions of India.

I have felt the need to study Naipaul's India related works, a novel and three travelogues which deal with Indian social , economic and political status around the globe. For the better understanding of Naipaul's 'image of India,' mine is a fresh, broad and comprehensive look of his India related works, *An Area of Darkness, India a Wounded Civilization, India a Million Mutinies Now and A House for Mr. Biswas* a novel which very much appears like Seepersad Naipaul's biography, where one finds ample of India and Indianess.

It is a study of Naipaul's views, comprising love and hate. And Naipaul's comprehensive vision which gathers in one complex whole, the political, cultural historical and religious coordinates of the Indian society and shows how ideologies exploit this interlacing to serve their insidious purposes. This aspect

of Naipaul's India related works makes it all the more relevant. This work would be an assessment of the reliability and authenticity of facts given in Naipaul's India related works. It would also account for Naipaul's attitudinal shifts and ideological somersaults. It will therefore assess Naipaul in a diachronic perspective where the evolution of his "images of India," his ideas and his many retractions can be situated with reference to recorded history.

The study of India was confined for centuries to that of Ancient India and was regarded as a hyper specialist occupation pursued by savant and Indologists. It is only recently, that studies on modern India have been undertaken by writers and scholars of different countries in the world, including India.

There are many ways of treating a subject like this and each would be valid in so for as it would bring out the cultural process of a country and its civilization. No doubt it would be interesting to find out the hidden source of information, inspiration and prejudices of writers from different cultural *miHeu* which have conditioned the reaction of the foreign writers in their assessment of India.

The image of India that some of the writers have depicted has been determined by Western and more especially British perceptions. My intention is to assess the image of India presented by a writer of Indian origin but born and brought up abroad.

The present study investigates the 'image of India' that is presented by Naipaul through his India related works:

The image of India in the history he comes across,

The image of India that he gets to see through the people he meets,

The image of India that he perceives in the places he visits,

The image of India that he finds in the religious practices he observes is what this study includes.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Research is the process of solving problems and finding facts in a organized way. Research work is done by using the already known facts and building on it. Additional knowledge is obtained by proving existing theories and by trying to better explain observations. It is in fact a systematic investigation into the set topic and study of materials and sources related to the topic in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

Inter-textual and intra-textual method of exploration is adopted to penetrate into the connections, similarities, dissimilarities and contradictions among the India related works of Naipaul, that I have selected for my study. This method of study proves to be apt to see whether his judgment in one book is the ultimate one or is it altered or retracted in his other books. Not only this, a comparative study of his judgments and opinions in contrast with the facts of recorded history and conventional wisdom is attempted through the adopted method of study.

I have even adopted textual method of criticism, as one cannot interpret Naipaul's works, especially the novel of Indian background *A House For Mr. Biswas* which I have chosen, without looking into its biographical details. In addition I am going to analyze, interpret and evaluate them, considering its literary merits.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM

When it comes to writing about India there are many occasions where we do not find any objectivity or dispassionate appraisal for this reason it seems wiser to discount the absolute validity of the observation and to concentrate instead on why writer like Naipaul perceive the image of India as they do. There are essentially two 'images of India' that we come across. According to one's bent India may be seen as heaven or hell; a dream or a night mare. On his first visit to India V S Naipaul, for example speaks of "The delirium of seeing certain aspects of myself magnified out of recognition.... Hysteria had been my reaction

and a brutality dictated by a new awareness of myself as a whole human being and a determination touched with fear to remain what I was."(21AD). Naipaul, who is racially Indian but culturally Western, has many variations in presenting his image of India.

This work is an attempt in finding the 'image of India' in normative history of a modern writer of Indian origin, through a close analysis of his writings, the study examines the psychological processes of acculturation to the outside world and is an attempt to sketch an evolutionary progression from loss to recovery and self in V S Naipaul through his portrayal of India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The prime duty of the researcher is to enlist and review the earlier research works done in the related field. I have qualitatively analysed some of the research and critical works related to my topic, which has provided a significant indication for my further study. Researchers accounting beyond 500 have worked and many a hundreds have been working on V S Naipaul and his works. This interest towards Naipaul and related themes has considerably increased after he was awarded Noble Prize.

1. **Bruce King,** ***V S Naipaul,***
2. **Suman Gupta,** ***V.S.Naipaul,***
3. **R N Sarkar :** ***India related Naipaul: A study in Art,***
4. **Dr. Anil Kumar,** ***Naipaul, India and Indianess : A Critique,***
5. **Amod Kumar Rai:** ***V S Naipaul : A study of his nonfictions,***
6. **Namrata Rathore Mahanta,** ***V S Naipaul: The Indian Trilogy,***

After analyzing and writing a review on these works I have arrived to a conclusion that the theme like 'image of India' in the works of V S Naipaul has not been dealt with.

STUDY OF VS NAIPUAL'S WORKS

We find some sort of Indianess in many of V S Naipaul's novels. I have studied analytically all the works of Naipaul. As my prime concentration is on the 'image of India' I have minutely studied, analysed and enlisted the themes related to my topic in India related works namely *An Area of Darkness, India A Wounded Civilization, India a Million Mutinies Now* and a novel *A House for Mr. Biswas* which is very much autobiographical and has Indian plot. In addition, I have studied and analysed secondary sources, news paper reviews, interviews of V S Naipaul.

I have divided the thesis into six main chapters considering the nature and scope of the study. **First chapter** gives a brief introduction to the topic and area of my research, the life and works of V S Naipaul, objective of my study and the methodology that I have adopted to pursue my work.

Second chapter surveys the literature that has produced on Naipaul by eminent critics and scholars, the areas and issues they have addressed have been assessed to check the relevance with my topic. **Third chapter** reviews the 'image of India' in world literature , where in I have tried to assess varied images of India that we get see in German, Russian and English literatures. I have even tried to perceive the 'image of India' portrayed in the works of Indian English writers.

Fourth and fifth chapters make the core of my study where I have tried to lay emphasis on the chief concern of my study 'image of India' in the India related works of V S Naipaul , his Indian trilogy *An Area of Darkness, India : A Wounded Civilization, India : A Million Mutinies Now* and his master piece *A House For Mr.Biswas* a novel.

Sixth chapter draws conclusion to the study considering the evolution in Naipaul's 'image of India', how it has evolved in these fifty three years, right from his first visit in 1960 to the recent one .

Final part of the thesis comprises of Bibliography, V.S.Naipaul's Interview, D.R.Nagaraj's Article, Girish Karnad's opinion, Biographical outline of V.S.Naipaul's life and achievements, my published articles on V.S.Naipaul and Photos.

CONCLUSION

To conclude I feel Naipaul in his 'image of India' exposes the social, economical political and more importantly cultural on goings in India while at the time of his visit. Naipaul has written what he has seen and has used his eyes and heart for seeing. His depiction of India has attracted unwarranted criticism form many of the sensitive Indian critics in my opinion Naipaul has written what really the people of concerned countries think and believe. He has not paved way for any presuppositions in his books. We get to see the extensive inheritance that generates the immense literary fertility of Naipaul, and certain hall marks of his style as well, while portraying India.

Inter-textual and intra-textual method of exploration is adopted to penetrate into the connections, similarities, dissimilarities and contradictions among the India related works of Naipaul, that I have selected for my study. This method of study proves to be apt to see whether his judgment in one book is the ultimate one or is it altered or retracted in his other books. Not only this, a comparative study of his judgments and opinions in contrast with the facts of recorded history and conventional wisdom is attempted through the adopted method of study.

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1.4 A Brief Introduction to the Life and Works of V.S Naipaul.

Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born on 17th August, 1932 at Chaguanas in Trinidad. His family was an impoverished, rural, Hindu-speaking, immigrant family. His Grandfather had come from an agrarian village of Uttar Pradesh in North India, as an indentured laborer in 1880's. His father, Seepersad Naipaul (1906-53), a well known reporter for the *'Trinidad Guardian'*, published *'Gurudeva and other Indian Tales* (1943), among the earLiest Trinidadian fiction that treated the local East-Indian community from within. At that time Indian community was degenerating in Trinidad for ossification and sterility because of its sense of alienation and exHe. He dealt with the theme of socio-economics, degeneration in the small Hindi speaking Indian community of the Trinidadian island. His writings were objective, satiric, anti-romantic, yet non-western in point of view as a result of exHe and loss of identity. It is apparent that they have influenced his son's creative writing.

After the completion of his elementary education at Port of Spain, Naipaul attended Queens Royal college from 1943 to 1948. Meanwhile, he received another fellowship by which he attended University College, Oxford, for BA(HON.). After his graduation he became an editor for the BBC, '*Caribbean Voice'*. He married Patricia Ann Hale, who had been a fellow student for some years (1957-61), and after her untimely death he married Nadira with whom he still stays with. He had been a reviewer for the *'New Statesman'* and earned the name 'a particularly brutal critic'. Over the years, both of his stay in Wiltshire, London since 1950 and his journey to many countries, Naipaul has written a large number of fictional and nonfictional works. He made several visits to India, his ancestral land, among which, his first visit in 1962, second in 1976 and third visit in 1989 are significant as each of these visit was followed by a book on Indian civilization.

Naipaul is a writer of a rare distinction, whose fastidious, sardonic tone controls a profound concern with twentieth century uncertainties and such

damaging effects of imperialism upon the people of the third world as cultural alienation and deracination. His writings reflect the problems resulting from his own expatriation, exile and alienation. His feeling of double root lessness, sense of displacement and loss of identity in the West Indies and subsequent exile : are the source of his analysis of the effects of colonialism on the modern world.

Facts like, 'VS Naipaul, whose grandfather had come from India to Caribbean, as an indentured laborer, completed his early education in port of span, Trinidad, and after emigrating to England, was graduated from oxford', are of considerable importance for understanding Naipaul's progressive alienation from the three cultures that shaped him, his disaffection from any particular literary community or tradition, and his concern with political and modern freedom exile , and the quest for an order out of chaos. These are the themes, in one way or the other, find their way into his writing.

According to Karl Miller, "V S Naipaul's fiction describes the fortunes of an emergent country. His novels can be said to define the transition from colonialism to independence. The emergent country is based on Trinidad, where he grew up, and it is generally identified as such, but 'the same thing has happened in twenty countries. Despite all this, despite his services as a chronicler, or connoisseur, of political change, his subject matter can often seem like a kind of pre-politics. He is certainly far from enthusiastic about the kind of politics that enfranchisements and elections have accustomed us to. Naipaul is not an avant-garde writer, and he has not received the indulgence, and the long, inspecting essays, that avant-garde writers frequently attract. There could be no cult of Naipaul. He favors picaresque narratives or swift comic treatments. But, if his books are not difficult, they are not simple either. Here, for example, is someone with conservative leanings who nonetheless writes movingly about the poor and aspiring, a compassionate man who is also fastidious and severe. To regard him as one of those Commonwealth writers who specialize in local color and the

best of the younger British novelists, and his translation from the Caribbean to the metropolis is among the posthumous benefits conferred by the old principal of Imperial Preference.[3]

For the better understanding of a personality like Naipaul one has to get into his works;

***The Mystic Masseur*:**

V.S. Naipaul's first novel, *The Mystic Masseur*; was published in 1957, and its title itself announces his preoccupation with the career of a charlatan who lends himself to revolutionary situations. Not that this particular mystic, Ganesh Ramsumair, exactly sets the sugarcane on fire but that he rises from rags to riclies by manipulating the credulity of his community in a clever manner. He grows up semi-orphaned in a small village of Trinidad called Four ways and is briskly married to a cantankerous Hindu girl named Leela Ramlogan. He potters about on a nest egg left to him by his father, is mistaken for a man of learning on account of his habit of reading books, and decides to be a mystic masseur. He pronounces on the world and the flesh, cures the sick, works miracles, and pockets the widow's mite. He launclies taxis to bring cHent-converts to his place and opens restaurants to feed them. His fame spreads over the whole of Trinidad, in 1946, when the first elections are held on this island, Ganesh caslies in on his popularity and gets elected as a Member of the Legislative Council. In his new role, he first acts, as a defender of the people, refusing to participate in the rituals of the British governors. He even supports a strike of sugar workers, on a platform vaguely Marxist, but when he is roughly handled by the crowd, his sympathies turn quite the other way; he adopts the clotlies and attitude of the British governors, becomes an appointed, no longer elected, member, is awarded the M.B.E. and finally appears in England as G. Ramsay Muir. In each step of his career, Naipaul parodies, quite lightheartedly, the rise to power and prosperity of a representative of the people in a newly

independent state. "The history of Ganesh is the history of our time",[4] Naipaul says congenially.

As Karl Miller aptly puts it, "*The Mystic Masseur* is a comedy of manners, and the manners are bucolic. The characters speak an English whose quaintness is relished, and is indeed a cardinal feature of the novel: all a bride needs to make she straight as an arrow is a little blows every now and then'. The rules and solidarities of village life impart something of an urban Victorian stiffness and sickliness. But this is essentially a bare, crude, secluded society, with a large number of simpletons, and in a place like this the role of Charlatan can be interpreted fairly charitably. In Ganesh the simpleton and the Charlton are one and indivisible. His ruses and extortions are seen for what they are: they cause as much suffering as they reHeve. But they are also seen as a livelihood, and as a social institution. In such a society, his skills are important. They are -not marginal. There is nothing shady or surreptitious about them, however much they may be condemned in the press".[5]

The Suffrage of Elvira:

In 1958 appeared Naipaul's second novel, *The Suffrage of Elvira*, which is another comedy of manners and announces another of his resident preoccupations. A society in which the charlatan is respectable has been converted into a democracy -after the Second World War, and a new breed of politicians, is hatched, stumping the sticks, finagling, greasing palms. The war has brought American military bases to the island, and these have given the people a taste of the modern world of consumers and advertisements and packaging: a world that rides in taxis and listens to radios and spends money. It is under these circumstances that a sulky businessman called Mr. Harbans makes a bid for political office when the multi-racial community of Elvira undergoes its second general election in 1950. He succeeds, not because he has any political policy or programme, but because he ralLies the voters on his side by means of

coalitions, treacheries and bribes. Graft is seen, again, as a livelihood, and as a form of welfare: those with nothing else to sell will sell their vote. 'Greed is scarcely a factor. A society of entrenched habits is adjusting itself to change, and the mechanism of adjustment is graft. Democracy in Elvira is a maze of deals and inducements.

In Gordon Rohlehr's view, "The deeper implication of the first two books is that West Indian Society, emerging from ignorance and superstition, is peculiarly susceptible to depredation by the fraud and the politician, and by all opportunists who are prepared to exploit the social unease for their personal ends. That Ganesh and Harbans are treated so genially conceals Naipaul's seriousness of purpose. Ganesh who poses as the defender of Hinduism while it is politic and profitable to do so, completely rejects Indian dress and changes his name to G.Ramsay Muir once he becomes a successful politician. This change of name and dress is always used by Naipaul to symbolize the acculturation of the East Indian to pseudo-western patterns of life, which is something he writes off with bitterness, despair and regret. One should not be misled by his genial tone to overestimate his admiration for Ganesh, the successful fraud."[6]

***The Middle Passage* :**

Had not Naipaul developed beyond *The Suffrage of Elvira*, he would have been a worthless writer. But four years after its publication Naipaul brought out ***The Middle Passage***, an account of a visit he made to the Caribbean in 1960 after living in England for many years. The theme of this book is a quotation by James Anthony Froude, who says of the West Indies 'There be no people there in the true sense of the word, with a character and purpose of their own.' This sums up the West Indian Society as presented in *The Saffrage of Elvira,* but in *The Middle Passage,* Naipaul explains why West Indian Society is the way it is, and explanation is always a first step towards understanding and sympathy. Naipaul says that slavery, alHed with Christianity did the greatest damage to the Negro

by destroying his values and setting before him the ideals of white civilization. Unfortunately, this 'white civilization' is not really a civilization as it is in Europe; it is a form of behavior represented by third-rate white people who have had a chance to get rich in the West Indies in a way they would not in England. As for Indians, who were brought to the West indies as indentured laborers by the British and who form about half the population, Naipaul says they are a 'peasant-minded,' money-minded community, spiritually static because cut off from its roots, its religion reduced to rites without philosophy, set in a materialistic colonial society ... even more philistine than the White. Between the Indians and the blacks there exists an antipathy. The blacks have a deep contempt for all that is not white, their values being those of imperialism at its worst. The Indians despise the blacks for not being Indian.

Such a society understandably has no inner values. It merely copies its way of life from Western consumer society, "B" films, and cheap American magazines. It is dazzled by the glitter of luxuries. It admires only 'success,' e.g. those who make money and those who are good cricketers. It is assumed by such a society that every person of eminence is crooked. Thus when it comes to politics, "Everyone spoke of nation and nationalism but no one was willing to surrender the privHeges or even the separateness of the group." And, Naipaul adds, as if conscious of having to explain his shortcomings, "No writer can be blamed for reflecting his society."[7]

***Miguel Street* :**

In 1959 appeared Naipaul's collection of a series of short stories entitled *Miguel Street* which deals with the life of people living in an urban slum in Trinidad. Though published two years after *The Mystic Masseur, Miguel Street* was the first of Naipaul's books. Consequently, its design is as episodic as that of Charles Dickens's Sketclies by Boz. Besides, the characterizations show a human sympathy and understanding that is rare in Naipaul's satire. Of course,

there is some ironic distancing as the stories are told by a boy-narrator in retrospect after his experience has prompted him to take a flight from Trinidad and a scholarship from the famous Ganesh Ramsumair.

Early on, a theme of futility is established:

"Pope's workshop no longer sounded with hammering and sawing. The sawdust no longer smelled fresh, and became black, almost like dirt. Pope began drinking a lot, and I didn't like him when he was drunk. He smelled of rum, and he used to cry and grow angry and want to beat up everybody. That made him an accepted member of the gang".[8]

The whole pattern of the book is to depict the movement of life from freshness to dirt, and from laughter to tears in a world where poverty, prostitution and drinking are the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, at every point the boy-narrator judges and measures this degradation, until he finally rejects a society which reduces everyone to its own level of immorality. But while the boy-narrator hints a norm by saying that he does not like Pope drunk, Miguel Street accept him fully. When Pope goes to jail, the Mecca of Miguel Street, the verdict of the street is, "We was wrong about Pope. He is a man like any of we."[9] This shows that the society of *Miguel Street* shares the distortion of accepted moral values with the society of *The Mystic Masseur* and yet its members preserve a sense of solidarity and fellow-feeling : "A stranger could drive through Miguel Street and just say 'Slum !' because he could see no more. But we who lived there saw our street as a world."[10]

Laughter is used by the poor inhabitants of *Miguel Street* both as avenue of escape and a defensive mechanism. It allows an acceptable outlet so that a man can detach himself and make light of his predicament: and in detachment his laughter forms a shield between him and his sad lot. Thus Bogart grows into the image of the American film character who bears the same name. Morgan burns his house to the ground in a desperate bid to gain sympathetic laughter.

However, an unspoken code or propriety controls the street's laughter and prevents it from becoming contemptuous or cynical. Hat, the homespun philosopher, constantly reminds everyone that laughter conceals a sense of tears, and the boy-narrator displays a heartfelt concern for the plight of others by withholding his laughter from that of the crowd when he realizes how deeply someone can be hurt. Besides, nobody laughs either at "Big Foot's" cowardice or at Laura's incomprehensible love for her eight illegitimate children. Consequently, *Miguel Street* comes across to the reader not as a jungle but as a place where people maintain fellow-felling and humor in the face of insuperable odds and thus convert it into an Arcadian. Setting which disappears from Naipaul's subsequent novels and is replaced by America or a version of it, and by some other influences as well.

***A House for Mr. Biswas* :**

Naipaul's fourth novel, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), is his finest achievement. It is a tragic-comic and deeply understanding study of a mediocre little man's struggle to establish himself in an imitative, transient colonial society, because he feels himself to be destined for better things. The symbol of his quest is the individual ownership of a house, which he does attain, though, like everything else in his life, incompletely. By assuming the role of an official biographer of a notability, and consistently referring to the protagonist as Mr. Biswas, Naipaul achieves a remarkable kind of detachment that enables him to present Biswas as simultaneously absurd and heroic. Biswas has not only to assert himself against a hostile social environment but also to clamber out of the status of a hanger-on in the household of his prosperous Indian in-law's, the Tulsi family. Through the detailed activities of a household of Indian origin of the second and third generations of settlement in Trinidad, Naipaul highlights the clinging to a decadent cultural heritage on the part of a deracinated people. But Biswa's quest is also a rebellion against such an existence. It may be a satiric view of shriveling Indian roots in the Caribbean, but it is also ultimately about

large-scale deracination caused by imperial processes in the past, and while there is regret for what these deracinated East Indians have lost, there is also, in Biswas's limited achievement, a celebration of freedom from ways of life now irrelevant in the West Indies.

The story of Mohun Biswas captures authentic Trinidad-Hindu Indian life-dialect, customs, natural setting but it also transcends provincial boundaries and evokes concepts that are universal in their human implications. The novel has been viewed as an epic and its hero as an 'Everyman' Biswas's tenacious fight to gain his own house is symbolic of man's need to develop an authentic identity in an inhospitable world. Born in the family of a poor laborer of Indian origin in Trinidad and rendered homeless at an early age by the death of his father, Biswas has nothing to recommend him but a talent for sign-painting and the status of a Brahmin. These two attribute together to land him in trouble. For it is while he is painting decorations at the Hanuman House of the prosperous Tulsi family that he is detected passing a love-note to one of the Tulsi daughters named Shama. Since he happens to be a poor Brahmin, Mrs. Tulsi, the imperious head of the family, and her right-hand man Seth force him to marry Shama and live with them like their other sons-in-law who constitute their workforce. Though marriage into the Tulsi family provides Biswas greater security than he has known before, in return the family demands strict conformity to its Hindu code and unquestioned obedience to its head. He accepts the security but rejects the orthodox and authoritarian arrangement of the Tulsi household. He calls Hanuman House a zoo managed by "the old queen" Mrs. Tulsi, and "the big boss", Seth; he nicknames the Tulsi sons, Shekhar and Owad, as "dogs" and spits at one of them to the disgust of the entire household. He criticizes the Tulsis for mixing up Hindu Puja with the observance of Christ's birthday and Good Friday. He speaks Creole English in Hanuman House while everyone else speaks Hindi, and he refuses to work as a laborer for the Tulsis and continues to paddle his own canoe as a sign-painter even after his marriage with Shama. But the Tulsi's come

to regard his rebellion against them as a joke, and accept him as a licensed joker in order to neutralize the effect of his wit. They also remind him that he has come to them without any money and is therefore a nonentity at their beck and call. He, however, tries to escape the stranglehold of the 'bliss' on him by working as a shopkeeper at The Chase, as a supervisor of laborers at Green Vale, and as a hack-journalist and a Social Welfare Officer in Port of Spain. But, although he manages to establish areas of independence for himself he can never completely break away from the Tulsis. He must submit to his wife and children who remain tied to the Tulsi household for help in times of unemployment and illness. In this struggle the idea of a house of his own becomes an obsession with him as it is a symbol of stability and independence. He builds a house at Green Vale, but it is destroyed in a storm and leaves him seriously depressed. He builds another house at Shorthills, but it is burnt down by a fire and forces him to shift to the crowded house of the Tulsis. But the Tulsi household disintegrates under the pressure of the selfishness and greed of its members who have been deeply influenced by the Western ideals of economic self-reliance and individual liberty on account of their education and travel. Consequently, Biswas is forced to buy a house on Sikkim Street in Port of Spain by borrowing money from his uncle Ajodha. He is happy to move into a house of his own with his family at long last. The house is jerry-built and mortgaged, but it is his own house and it has enabled him to claim his portion of the earth after a tenacious struggle. He dies of a heart attack soon after occupying it, but it is better than death in the house of the Tulsis.

According to Gordon Rohlehr, "In many ways Biswas is an archetypal figure. He is described as stranger, visitor and wanderer. Weak and frequently absurd, he is recognized in Hanuman House as a buffoon, and the role of fool is one which he at times accepts in humiliation and at others, rejects with bitterness. But Biswas the clown is also Biswas the rebel. He is also the man, the artist, and his art is the only aspect of him that the Tulsis really admire, not realizing that it

is an expression of the very personality they detest. Whenever Biswas is attacked by the sense of life as meaningless void, he immediately turns to his paint bruslies and tries to create something against the emptiness. Perhaps he himself gives the best definition of his significance. To his bewildered son who asks him, 'Who are you ? he replies, I am just somebody. Nobody at all I am just a man you know "Biswas is everyman, wavering between identity and nonentity, and claiming his acquaintance with the rest of men".[11]

***Mr. Stone and The Knights Companion*:**

Naipaul's fifth novel, *Mr. Stone and The Knights Companion* (1963), is set wholly in England with English Characters and deals with an old man's quest for renewal in the midst of decay and signs of imminent extinction. Its hero, Mr. Stone, is a sixty-two-year-old bachelor librarian of a large firm called Exal in London. He is a man of funny but principled habit and lives in a neglected house looked after by an old housekeeper, Miss Millington. A tall, handsome, timid clockwork man, thoughtfully living in the past, he has lately been overcome by premonitions of retirement and death. Looking at the houses, offices and schools around him he hates their permanence. He takes to seeing people sitting or standing in mid-air, as it were, unsupported by floors, bricks and mortar. It occurs to him that only the flesh is important and that soon in the very place where he stands now, there will be vacancy, for he will die. One moment he is frightened, the next he daydreams. He fancies that he can fly and passes hours in imaginary flight over the heads of other men.

The vague uneasiness that has been growing in Mr. Stone's mind for some time comes into focus upon his chance reading of an advertisement about "those who doubt the coming of spring".[12] With approaching retirement, idleness, old age and after that the empty void of death staring him in the face, he discovers that he has very good reason to doubt the coming of spring. It is while he is still recovering from this shocking discovery that he makes an acquaintance which

reshapes his quiet routine. At a party given by his friend Tomlinson, he meets a witty and bouncing widow named Mrs. Springer. Loneliness calls to loneliness and Mr. Stone marries Mrs. Springer after a brief courtship. But he regrets his marriage as he feels caged and controlled by a woman. This feeling grows in him until the occurrence of the strange experience on his honeymoon in Cornwall, when he comes across a recently retired old worker named Fred sitting between two blooming women in a tea-shop like their captive. Out of the turmoil of this vision—ultimately a vision of his own position-arises one original idea of his life with which he seeks to halt his race towards a useless old age and a meaningless death. The idea is that the large firm for which he works should establish a system of pensioned ex-employees visiting each other with gifts suppHed by it, and reporting any cases of hardship which it then alleviates. It is intended to establish some personal relations in a commercial world, a final gesture of solidarity with other people arising out of Mr. Stone's own isolated state. Ironically, however, Mr. Stone has to watch his idea 'licked into shape' as the Kinghts companion by the crafty and lecherous P.R.O. of the firm, Bill Whymper, who not only converts it into a public relations exercise for his own profit but also seduces Mr. Stone's unattractive niece into the bargain. Mr. Stone is left fulfilled yet unfulfilled, for he sees that the beauty of his idea has been ruined by its realization. He has been known as a main subject to 'the contempt of the kind that follows affection'; now he thinks :

"Nothing pure ought to be exposed, nothing that came from the heart. All action and all creation was a betrayal of feeling."[13]

And through the inevitable compromises, the tedious routine work, the pressure of other interests, he becomes disillusioned, and his life declines again into darkness. His temporary involvement in the activity of the world is destroyed, and in his finding comfort in the ephemerality of all life, and the idea of destruction as the only lasting action, the disturbing negativity of his character and Naipaul's vision, becomes clear:

"He stripped the city of all that was enduring and saw all that was not flesh was of no importance to man. All that mattered was man's own frailty and corruptibility. The order of the universe, to which he had sought to ally himself, was not his order. So much he had seen before. But now he saw, too, that it was not by creation that man demonstrated his power and defied this hostile order, but by destruction. By damming the river, by destroying the mountain, by scarring the face of the earth that nature's attempt to reassert herself became a mockery."[14]

Yet he takes consolation in having survived in such a world for sixty-two years and thus experiences calm of mind.

According to Karl Miller, "In this novel, Naipaul renounces his multi-racial characters and colonial themes. lb write about the English-the domestic English, moreover, at their sootiest and drabbest—is something which no West Indian novelist would lightly undertake. In fact, it is the lightness of the novel which assures its success. The ironic elegance of the early work reappears. Half-baked, stately Mr. Stone is a study in eccentricity of a kind which belongs naturally to a comedy of manners. And that is the point. His eccentricities are proper to a comedy of manners and are no more marked or exaggerated than are those of the worthies of Miguel Street. They are not there as a means of dissembling the blackness or condescension of the un acclimatized observer. Besides being Indian and Trinidadian, Naipaul is also English."[15]

***The Mimic Men* :**

Naipaul's sixth novel, *The Mimic Men* (1967), directly protrays the new order and completes the model of an emergent country. Its narrator-hero, Ralph Kripal Singh, examines personal nullity in relation to post-independence politics in the island of Isabella. Of Hindu birth and elitist background, Ralph Kripal Singh has a more intellectual, more romantic and grander vision than that of the lowborn Biswas of his distinctiveness in an order less West Indian island and pursues it restlessly in various ways. From early youth his native island impresses

him as a place of shipwreck. Often he indulges reveries about his Aryan ancestors, magnificent horsemen Wandering the Himalayan Mountains in search of him, their lost chieftain. In his fantasies rejects Isabella's sea and 'Sind and tines that his 'true native environment is mountains and snow. But when he leaves tropical Isabella for temperate London to pursue higher education, his rootless isolation is merely transplanted to another setting :

"In the city as nowhere else we are reminded that we Ire individuals, units so quickly had London gone sour on me. The great city, centre of the world, in which, fleeing disorder, I had hoped to find the beginning of order. So much had been promised by the physical aspect."[16]

As his experience makes more and more clear, he is not to find the order he seeks in physical appearances. Therefore, he undertakes "the romance of interracial marriage" with an English girl named Sandra who is as lost as he is. He returns home with her to the dismay of his mother, makes money through business deals and lost& himself in the social whirl with "the jet-set". Then he is caught up in the game of island politics and becomes a minister in the cabinet of Negro Browne. However, in each of these endeavors the basic falsity soon results in more disorder : the marriage ends in divorce. The pleasure bought with money fades; the social circle disintegrates into quarreling factions; the political charade falls apart on account of a strike by cane-workers. Ultimately, the mimicry out of which he attempts to fashion an organized, meaningful existence leads to disillusionment and frenzy. Lacking the ability to impose any controlling direction on life, he decides to retire to a contemplative life in a London suburban hotel. He gives up both the ideal fancies of his youth and the ineffectual mimicry which marks his later activities. Freed from external pressures in retirement, he at last settles upon a method of establishing order. With detachment and restored calm he takes up his pen and, turning to the past, assembles the fragments of his shattered experiences into an autobiography entitled *The Mimic Men.*

The many ideas and perceptions which Naipaul mentions in *The Mimic Men* give it a compactness and complexity not evident in his other works, even in *A House for Mr. Biswas* with its vast canvas, its buzzing activities and its host of characters. The form of the contemplative, therapeutically autobiography in *The Mimic Men* widens Naipaul's range and enables him to speak discursively on politics, power, isolation, displacement, racial conflicts and identity. He examines, the educational system of the colonies, which, with its 'accent on ideas irrelevant to the local situation, produces mimic men. He explores the circumstances which lead to the political-cum-religious movement of Ralph's father. He also examines the loneliness and despair of an emigrant student in the impersonal metropolis of London and the problems associated with mixed marriage in the contemporary West Indian Society. Lastly, he gives a perceptive account of the cultural and political situation of a colony emerging into independence and struggling for an identity, and of the attitude of a politician living like a recluse in London. All -these ideas are examined in terms of the experiences of the central figure, Ralph Kripal Singh. They are like beads on a string, which represents the central theme of the novel: the nature of the mimic man in all phases of his experience-his sense of loss and loneliness and extinction; his denial of participation and banishment to the fringe of all societies; his escapist 'vision of Central Asian horsemen, among whom he is one, riding below a sky threatening snow to the very end of an empty world, his ennui and his flight to 'the final emptiness'.

The novel is in the form of the' memories of the narrator-protagonist and consists of three parts. In the first part, the narrator is in London, contrasting his new impressions of the city with those he had of it after the war. He recalls his student days, his marriage to an English girl Sandra, his return to Isabella and his success in the world of business, politics, and 'the jet- set' followed by the break up of his marriage. In the second part, the narrator moves further back in time, to his childhood days. In the third part, the narrator concentrates on his

failure as a politician in post-colonial Isabella and then reverts to the present in London, including his abortive affair with Lady Stella. The novel succeeds quite well in what it sets out to be : 'the exposition of the malaise of our times pointed and illuminated by personal experience. But too much of it fails to go beyond mere verbal statement, for though the narrative asserts that Isabella is a second-hand colony of uncreative men and untalented clerks, where society is fragmented and inorganic, exhausted, fraudulent and cruel there is hardly any dramatic demonstration of such attributes. Who in other novels Naipaul uses drama or symbolism to suggest an almost inevitable defeat, this is done largely by plain statement. In *The Mimic Men* : 'The career of the colonial politician is short and ends brutally.'

The Mimic Men denies validity to existing notions of post-colonial independence, but it is not a political novel. Naipaul makes Ralph's political career only a pan of the third section of the novel, giving more importance to his experience as student, householder and recluse. He is more interested Ili a study of the unanchored, estranged individual's search for order than with the issues of politics. But he maintains two divergent attitudes of the colonial society towards independence. The first, the narrator's, is that order can be maintained in colonial society only by retaining the foreign traditions and values that have shaped it. He points out that Isabella was a benevolently administered dependency in his grandfather's time but has become a scene of chaotic power-struggle after independence. But Browne, the folk leader who becomes the Prime Minister, represents the other attitude. He wislies to abolish all traditions and values which remind the citizens of Isabella of their colonial bondage, yet Ralph, the victim of the colonial system, dreams in his London retreat of a life of imperial sway on a cocoa estate of Arcadian tropical beauty, while Browne, the nationalist, finds himself unable to cope with the problems of Isabella without assistance from the Foreign Office. For Naipaul, therefore, both Ralph and

Browne are mimic men and he is sympathetically aware of the situation in which they find themselves.

The first person narration of *The Mimic Men* raises the question of point of view; to what extent, that is, Ralph's point of view is Naipaul's. It is easier to distinguish Naipaul from the Ralph of whom the story is about than from the recluse Ralph who narrates the story. The former is a supercilious figure, a poseur and libertine. Detached from his former life and writing about it with restrain and coolness, is closer to Naipaul. Both author and narrator share a fear of the subterfuge that characterizes acquired power, but both are aware of 'the pathos of the politics of places' like Isabella. Both, too, are interested in the problems of the creative process: both wonder whether writers are incomplete people to whom writing is a substitute for life and whether the process of writing imposes a pattern and shape on life. But at times, as in the ironical treatment of Ralph's dream of imperial sway in his London retreat, Naipaul would appear to be, maintaining the double role of novelist and narrator. At the end of the novel, the process of writing does have a, therapeutic effect on Ralph, and the tone becomes palpably lighter to what extent is the Naipaul's tone? He did say in the past that he would like to be frivolous again and write another *Suffrage of Elvira*, but the tone of his subsequent novels has been as serious as It could be.

***Guerrillas* :**

Naipaul's seventh novel, *Guerrillas* (1975) is set in a West Indian island, independently governed but in reality owned by an American bauxite company. It dramatizes a melodramatic interaction of three characters : a would be Black power leader, a white South African liberal and former political prisoner and a young English woman whose political and orgasmic hopes of human possibility are forever being disappointed. Each makes guerrilla raids upon life. Their interaction leads to a macabre catastrophe and emptiness. They have no roots, no place, no centre, no freedom, only the flickering potential to reach them.

The Black Power leader is the half-Chinese Jimmy Ahmed, who has come from England with a reputation for leadership and is living in the commune at a place he calls Thrush cross range. The commune, however, is about to collapse on account of the disappearance of some of its members under mysterious circumstances. Jimmy is therefore left alone with his fantasies and his fears, with the disintegrating remnants of an artificial personality created by his own egotism and consolidated by the British press. Yet he is acknowledged as threat by the sophisticated politician of the island, Meredith. The reason is that Jimmy Ahmed hobnobs with dangerous visitors to the island like Peter Roche and his English mistress Jane. Roche is a white South African who has been imprisoned for suspected involvement in acts of sabotage against the Vorster regime. He too has achieved fleeting fame as a liberal hero in London before taking up a job with a local business firm. Roche is tentatively attracted to Jimmy, and his employers, eager to expunge a colonial connection, cynically patronize the commune. Jane, disappointed by Roche on discovering a baffling emptiness in his personality, is intrigued by Jimmy and insists on visiting his commune. Jimmy is flattered by Roche's interest, while taking care to treat him with an insultingly ironic servility. Jane, she can see only as a disturbing threat because of her association with revolutionaries. Besides, she is in search of a man of accomplishments and therefore jumps into bed with a man as soon as she meets him. Jimmy attempts to compensate for his basic insecurity by fantasizing about his potency, both sexual and political. His move to power fails and in reaction he brutally murders not only Jane but also his homosexual partner Bryant. Yet it is he who fills the victim's role.

V. S. Naipaul's attitude towards Jimmy is at times very tender, but his treatment of Jane is quite harsh. She is described in physical terms : beneath her apparent self-confidence, the muddle of her thoughts and emotions is mocked by the ungainly sexuality of her body, which sweats and menstruates beyond her control and finally provokes its own destruction. His evocation of the West

Indian landscape is equally sensual and creates a similar feeling of discomfort. Only Roche remains shadowy throughout as a physical presence and his motives remain somewhat obscure till he tells Meredith that his acts of political courage have been prompted by a curious sense of physical shame. The novel ends with Roche behaving in a morally shameful way: he, too, is a kind of victim.

Shame is, however, a recurrent motif in the novel : Jimmy shame at not being fully Negro, Jane's shame at being privileged Roche's shame at his inner hollowness, the shame of dependency, of revolution that can be quelled by few American helicopters, of living in 'a place that has exhausted its possibilities.' Jane and Roche work off their shame in bickering conversations, in scoring intellectual points, in an assumed can dour, a defiant acknowledgement of shame. Jimmy can appease his shame only by raping and murdering a white woman. Shame hangs over the long, lazy afternoon spent at Harry de. Tunja's, beach house, when Meredith plays a game with Roche, Jane and his able host. He asks them to tell him how they would spend a day if they had everything they wanted in the world. Before they reply, he writes with prophetic accuracy: 'The life being described is the life the speaker lives or a life he has already lived: The setting may change, but no one will make a fresh start or do anything new.' Elsewhere, Jimmy makes a related point. 'When everybody wants to fight, there's nothing to fight for. Everybody wants to fight his little war, everybody is a guerrilla'. These aimless, mimic rebels are equally incapable of imagining change and of laying down their arms.

To call this book depressing is to understate the point, but it is also extremely stimulating. The vision of the modern world it projects is uncompromisingly bleak and yet refreshingly honest. Accordingly the style has become concentrated and allusive; simple on the surface the prose does not reveal its meaning fully at first sight. The structure is elaborate, but gives an effect of economy. Nauseous experience molded into shape without denying its essential disorder.

***A Bend in the River* :**

Naipaul's eighth novel, *A Bend in the River* (1979), tragically acknowledges on a vaster scale than before the corruptibility of the human heart and of the means it has developed to secure the good life for various communities of people in the modern world. Though set in an unnamed but Zaire-like central African state, this plenteous, somber, apocalyptic novel is not so much about Africa as about the Western world's designs against the Third World and against itself, and the consequent wreckage in human distortions, apostasies, self-denials and brutalities. It may seem nihilistic but it appLies a stringently honest cant-test to most of the shibboleths of our times. With a balancing honesty it conveys wonder at the human capacity to survive in a hostHe world.

The narrator-protagonist of this novel is a Muslim businessman of Indian origin in the African country. To him a break for freedom, away from family, community, the ritual life, is not just desirable; it is his only way to survive, with pride, with a history. As an individual, his wish is 'not to be good, in the way of our tradition, but to make good.' This is given a greater urgency by the precariousness of his community itself; a community brought to Africa by 'one tide of history-forgotten by us, living only in books by Europeans that I was yet to read' and about to be swept away by another, that of black African nationalism. The real danger, then, to both Salim and his people, is to disappear without a trace, to leave no history. Since Salim is a doer, he survives the African state's revolutionary movements.

***The Enigma of Arrival*:**

Naipaul's ninth novel, The Enigma of Arrival (1987) holds in balance his immigrant community's longing for oneness with the spirit of the land of its origin and the futility of nostalgia: "There is no ship of antique shape to take us back. We had come out of the nightmare; and there was nowhere else to go."[17] Its ancestors clung to their rites of birth and death, because not to have done so

would have cut them off from the past, the sacred earth, and the gods. But its members can no longer do so as they have become self-aware and rites have lost all meaning for them. It, is this tension between the dark world of wholeness and myth, and the new one of self-awareness and change, between the world that is handed down to us by our ancestors, and the one that we make up ourselves, that has shaped Naipaul's vision of human destiny in this novel.

A Way in the World

Naipaul's tenth novel is *A Way in the World* (1994). One has the impression, from many of his novels, that Naipaul is his own main character. His personal story, or parts of it that relate to his theme, is repeated over and over. How he escaped from Trinidad by going to England on a scholarship; how he first became a writer; how he traced the darkness of India; how he wrote a history of Trinidad; how he came to terms with change and death. Naipaul's stories-or one should say, his story-are his way of making sense of trying to find order in his world, of 'looking for the centre'.

Of Naipaul's non-fictional works, dozen travelogues attract the critics as he, a zealous traveller has toured several countries like West Indies, South America, India, Argentina, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Congo, and has written several travelogues. *The Middle Passage*(1962) records Naipaul's impressions of colonial society in the West Indies and South America. He has toured India for three times and has written three sequential travelogues. *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *India; A Wounded Civilization*(1977) and *India; A Million Mutinies Now*(1990) are his important travelogues on India, the land of his ancestors. *An Area of Darkness* is a reflective and semi-autobiographical account of his two years stay in India. *India; A Wounded Civilization* is more a analytical study-prompted by the 1975 Emergency - of Indian attitudes, and the third, India; *A Million Mutinies Now* is the most realistic picture of peaceful and productive minute revolutions that are still happening in India. *The*

Overcrowded Barracoon (1972) is a selection of his longer essays. *The Return of Eva Peron with the Killings in Trinidad*(1980) contains studies of Argentina, the Congo and the *Michael X Killings,* and *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*(1981) is the result of seven months travel in 1979 and 1980 in Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. *Finding the Centre*(1984) contains two personal narrative pieces about the process of writing. *A Turn in the South*(1989) describes his journey through the deep south of America, *Homeless by Choice*, (1992) with Ruth Prawar Jhabvala and Salman Rushdie, *Beyond Behalf* (1998) Redefining Islam, *Between Father & Son* (1999) dealing with the letter between Naipaul and his Father Seepersad Naipaul, *Half a Life* (2001) a semi-autobiographical note, *The Writer and The World* (2002), *Magic Seeds* (2004), *A Writers People: Ways of Looking and Feeling* (2008), *The Masque of Africa : Glimpses of African Behalf* (2010) are the works published after the Noble award, but with less popularity.

However, Naipaul has remained a controversial figure, especially in India, his ancestral land, for his books on "the half-made societies" of the post-colonial world. Naipaul's travelogues on India such as *An Area of Darkness, India; A Wounded Civilization and India; A Million Mutinies Now* have been constantly attacked as superficial, prejudiced and filled with generalized, unsubstantiated conclusions.

Before dealing with Naipaul's travelogues we have to go through the meaning and definition of the term 'travelogue', as definitions provide a starting point in telling what to expect? And what to look for?

'Travelogue' literally means an illustrated narrative of journey or expedition. A Travelogue or a travel book is an appreciation of life a writer has seen and heard. A. Travel writing is a personal and imaginative vision a writer has honestly attempted. Elizabeth Watterson considers travelogue to be "a diary and narrative of travel, sport and adventure...a blend of description, anecdote

and personal commentary...most travelers packed some literary preconceptions along with their port-Monteux... All sifted what they saw through their own interest and needs, social and economic, personal and national, and the books they produced raged from slim sketclies to ponderous tones..."[18]

Travelogue is a minor from of literature. Most of the times it is very close to fiction, memoir and autobiography. It is, however, looked down upon as an interesting genre of literature. Since it is more than a tourist-guide or a report, it can be considered as a pleasurable piece of literary output. Today travelogue, like novels and short stories, is a popular genre. It presents naturally a series of sketclies of scenes and events. A travelogue shows the emotions that are associated with the travel-literature-dictum 'go, see, report'. In fact, a travelogue registers the physical, emotional and intellectual reactions of the traveler.

People travel having different motives in mind. Some have the desire of pleasing gods and some travel with missionary zeal. Even people travel keeping in mind the idea of the quest for the truths of life or for self-realization or for even so profound a motive like search for identity or roots.

Every intelligent traveler likes to write down his experiences and reactions at the time of his travel not merely with the intention of writing or publishing, but he likes to keep all those memories enshrined in his mind and heart. Few others moving one step forward even make notes of the conversations undergone with people whom they have encountered. Later, these very notes and opinions come out in the form of a travel book or travelogue. Nevertheless the fact that some people travel with a view of writing and publishing is undetectable.

V.S.Naipaul has written nearly a dozen travelogues, on India and other third world nations of Southern and Western hemisphere. His travelogues on India like *An Area of Darkness(1964), India; A Wounded Civilization(1977), and India; A Million Mutinies Now(1990),* on India, the land of his forefathers, are

superb in their quality, authenticity and evocation. Many critics, such as C.D.Narasimhaiah, Annaiah Gowda, K.Natwar Singh etc., opine that Naipaul's depiction of India in these three books is half-hearted and unrealistic. But they show the prevailing socio-economic-political condition. Naipaul after assessing all these intends to call India an 'Area of Darkness' or a 'Wounded Civilization' owing to destitution, over population, red tapism and other numerous odd and awkward conflicts and crisis.

Naipaul visited India for three times with the mere intention of searching his identity and roots. Each of his visit was followed by a book. The visits Naipaul made to India drive home a logical point that he wanted to show the world that India is a backward country but possesses a beautiful and benevolent culture and civilization. More importantly the Trinidad-Indian exposes the darker aspects of the country, of course, in a bid to make Indians realize their limitations and overcome them. For the first time in 1962 he visited India, stayed here for two years, and all his experiences and opinions during his stay, he depicts in his book *An Area of Darkness* which was published in the year 1964. For the second time in 1975 when he visits India and stays here for an year or so, comes out with an account which he calls it as *India; A Wounded Civilization,* which was published in the year 1979. In this travelogue, Naipaul recapitulates the feelings, the vast, mysterious and agonized sub-continent of India aroused to him. No doubt, what he saw and heard-evoked superbly and vividly but somewhat unrealistically. This book, in fact, reinforced his impression that India, wounded by a thousand years of foreign rule, has still not found an ideology of regeneration. In December 1988, for the third time, he visited India and left back in February 1990 leaving behind one more critical account on this sub-continent. *India; A Million Mutinies Now,* published in 1990 of course the last travelogue of Naipaul on the 'area of darkness or awakening' or the 'wounded civilization' is a brilliantly pleasurable (record) travelogue. This book appears

as to be a bundle of dismal pictures of men and women deliberately chosen by its author, it can be rightly called as a masterpiece of travel-writing. About this third and most possibly the last travelogue of Naipaul on India, K.Natwar Singh records, "with this book he may well have written his own enduring monument, in prose at once stirring and intensely personal, distinguished both by style and critical acumen"[19]

Some of Naipaul's statements like 'India is an unreal country' and more importantly his particularity about the scenes of 'defecation', 'begging' and so on have angered some of the patriotic and sensitive critics. Indian critics like C.D.Narasimhaiah, K.Natwar Singh, Anniah Gowda and others have censured Naipaul for his in genuine depiction of India. Even George Woodcock, does not accept Naipaul's assessment of India in total. These critics invariably think that Naipaul's. India is not their India. They arrive at a similar peroration that Naipaul's description of India is mixed with prejudice. C.D.Narasimhaiah asserts that, "While Mr.Naipaul is largely correct in his observations of life on the surface, he has not shown any conspicuous ability to penetrate the deeper layers of the Indian mind"[20]

The present study throws light on four works of Naipaul related to India, namely, *An Area of Darkness(1964), India; A Wounded Civilization(1979, India; A Million Mutinies Now(1990 and A House for Mr.Biswas* The reason for taking up only these three travelogues and a novel particularly is that, as the title of the tliesis itself signifies, an attempt has been made to consider the varied images of India that Naipaul presents and how far Naipaul is successful in finding his roots and how far he is victorious in his 'quest for identity' of his own. As Naipaul himself says in an interview with Shyam Ratna Gupta,

-"I would like to settle down in Bombay and rediscover my identity by losing myself in the millions of Indians".[21]

ACHIEVEMENTS OF NAIPAUL

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul, now seventy-two, received a Knighthood in the 1990 New Year's Honours' list for services to literature. He was one of the first winners of the Booker Prize, now Britain's leading literary award, in 1971 for In a Free State. In 1961 Naipaul received a grant from the Trinidad Government to travel in the Caribbean. He has been nominated for the Nobel almost every year after 1972. So confident was Newsweek that he would be awarded the Nobel in 1980 that they put him on the front cover as "The Master of Novel." He came close to it again in 1992 when the prize went to Derek Walcott. General opinion then was that if ever there was a time for a joint award for Literature, 1992 was the year because it would be some time before the Prize Committee would want to award it to someone in that region again. In 1993 he became the first recipient of the David Cohen British Literature Prize "to honour sustained achievement by a living writer." But when the nineties ended, the Nobel seemed to be a lost prospect. By 1961 Naipaul was the author of three successful books out of which two had been awarded prizes: the 1958 John Llewllyn Rhys Memorial Prize for The Mystic Masseur and the 1961 Somerset Maugham Award for Miguel Street. V.S. Naipaul won the Nobel Prize in literature 2001 "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories." The Nobel Prize Committee was undoubtedly right in its assessment of his achievement. The two novels by Naipaul that it singled out, A House for Mr. Riswas (1961) and The Enigma of Arrival (1987) are masterpieces of twentieth century fiction, and for these works alone Naipaul deserved the Noble Prize many years ago. He won the TS Eliot Award for creative writing in 1986. He is an honorary doctor of St. Andrew's College and Columbia University and of the Universities of Cambridge, London and Oxford.

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Chapter: Two

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Chapter: Two

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Naipaul is a writer of rare distinction, whose fastidious, sardonic tone controls a profound concern with twentieth century uncertainties and such damaging effects of imperialism upon the people of the third world as cultural alienation and deracination. His writings reflect the problems resulting from his own expatriation, exile and alienation. His feeling of double rottlessness, sense of displacement and loss of denetity in the West Indies and subsequent exile are the sources of his analyses of the effects of colonialism on the modern world.

Some of Naipaul's statement like 'India is an unreal country' and more importantly his particularity about the scenes of 'defecation', 'begging' and so on have angered some of the patriotic and sensitive critics. Indian critics like C.D. Narasimhaiah, K.Natwar Singh, Anniah Gowda and other have censured Naipaul for his ingenuine depiction of India. Even George Wood coock, does not accept Naipaul's assessment of India in total. These critics invariable think that Naipaul's India is not their India. They arrive at a similar peroration that Naipaul's descritption of India is mixed with prejudice. C.D. Narasimhaiah asserts that, "While Mr. Naipaul is largely correct in his observations of life on the surface, he has not shown any conspicuous ability to penetrate the deeper layers of the Indian mind"

2.1. Bruce King, *V S Naipaul*, the Macmillan Press ltd, London 1993

In this user friendly book Bruce King shows how Naipaul's novels and non-fiction have developed through four distinctive periods each of which is characterized by a different manner. All of Naipaul's works share similar themes, preoccupations, literary techniques and formal literary structures. Bruce King looks at Naipaul's life in relationship to his books. Trinidadian society and politics, the Indian Diaspora and post-colonial literature.

Bruce King shows Naipaul's concern with freedom and security, for Naipaul according to Bruce King, security is part of a vision of the world which, while universal and applicable to all individuals and societies, is especially important to minorities, Diasporas. exile s and the recently decolonized.

In this book, Naipaul is not only looked at as a critic of decolonization, but the one who offers a balanced analysis of the need for and dangers of freedom. For Bruce King, Naipaul's appease to show, how easily the desire for liberty and recognition can turn into self destructive rage and continuing dependency. Bruce King feels that is true for the individual as for the nation, this opinion of Naipaul.

Naipaul, part of a generation that had to face the problems that resulted from the withdrawal of imperial order and the resulting cultural confusion. Yet, Naipaul's story appears unique as he having started with so little has come so far it is because of family and Trinidadian circumstances. He is an expatriate who, starting with no other means than his will and the talents that he has developed through hard work, has supported himself as a writer.

Bruce King strongly feels that "Naipaul's philosophy of life might be called 'existential'. By his readings of Albert Camu and jean Paul Sartre, Naipaul appears to have come to such views through his own observation and experience of the world. Yet Naipaul is simultaneously able to see that the "reality" "the truth" and "order" of the centre is also an illusion. This concisely expresses

several of Naipaul's themes, and shows why he has one of the most analytical perspectives on the post colonial world. But it leaves out such meters which have gone into Naipaul's writings as the effect upon him of his youth in Trinidad, discrimination against Indians in many parts of the third world"*.

Bruce King, analyzing the first three books of fiction, *Miguel Street, The Mystic Masseur and The Suffrage of Elvira,* feels that they are extraordinarily popular because of their comedy and themes such as the way impoverished, hopeless lives and the, chaotic mixing of cultures result in fantasy, brutality, violence and corruption. These three books of Naipaul reveal the social history including the development of protest politics in

*** Bruce King, V S Naipaul, the Macmillan Press ltd, London 1993, back cover page.**

Trinidad during the late 1930's and the changes that began to happen in Trinidad after the Second World War.

For Bruce King the tales in the *Miguel Street* reflect a time when Naipaul's family had moved from the enclosed Indian world of the country side to the more ethnically varied Port of Spain. The *Miguel Street* is Evelyn waggish in its speed, economy, understated satiric ironies, incongruities, comedy, undeveloped characterization, and unexpected changes in the direction of the plot, contrasts between what is said and done, parody and ironic placing of characters by a few details of the seen or by habits of speech (18).

The Suffrage of Elvira is a novel about the Indian population located in an isolated and neglected region of Trinidad, what are politically inactive compared to the local Negro and brown communities. The novel portrays the people uninterested in ideas. The theme of the novel being the political game that happens between the self declared leaders of the Hindu and Muslim Indian Communities (33).

A House for Mr. Biswa's according to Bruce King is Naipaul's first major novel and is a classic which can be compared to Chinua Achebe's *Things Falls Apart* and Patrick White's *Voss*. It is an imaginative, fictional recreation of the past. The main characters, places and events are based on Naipaul's father, Naipaul`s own youth and the larger family of which they were a part. Central vision of the novel finds expression in Naipaul's languages of order, disorder, extinction, void, and which influences the way he looks at society, politics and culture. According to Naipaul the world is without purpose, violent, dangerous, in the natural world, life is fearful, comfortless, irrational and brutal (37).

The Middle Passage is the first of Naipaul's travel books. Bruce King feels that Naipaul has set James Anthony Froude as his model. Naipaul draws (claims) strength to his claims about the basic situation in the colonies that has not changed since the last century. Naipaul according to Bruce King is of the opinion that the Europeans created no worthwhile society or culture, established no lasting economic foundations, had no vision, only imported a large number of salves and laborer from different cultures. Naipaul, makes mimicry of the colonizer and the racial resentment, even political fantasy and violence that gets intensified at the fame of the arrival of local self government (52).

For Bruce King reading *Mr. Stone and The Knights Companion* epitomizes well known aspects of English life, especially the dreariness, routine, security and the resignation of the poorly paid. At the same time it is infused with Indian fatalism and notions of activity as futile illusion, very interesting to note, *Mr. Stone and The Knights Companion* was written in Kashmir in 1962 during a year when Naipaul was examining his relationship to India (60).

In *AN AREA OF DARKNESS* for Bruce King, Naipaul who claims to be familiar with Indian customers still remains an outsider. Naipaul appears as a product of Trinidad and the new world, someone with western instincts concerning the worth of the individual, social justice, activity, accomplishment, the present Indian habits of passivity, fatalism and other world lines, even self

centeredness, are attractive and recognizable part of Naipaul himself. He is not a part of the society and tries to see it from outside as someone with western educated eyes and values. Naipaul is frustrated as India of his dreams did not exist. His one year stay in India 1962 has resulted in Naipaul's partial discovery of India which is both more varied and less ideal (63).

An *A Flag on the Island* is a collection of short fiction written by Naipaul at various times. For all these short fiction the science is set in the Hindu heartland of rural Trinidad. These writings for Bruce King are amusing thus rations of the way of the Hindu community were changing through contract with other cultures. They also reveal the antagonisms at the heart of social relations. The social causeries such as deceptions, feelings of guilt and family recriminations resulting from the temptation for trying the ways of other cultures (65).

The Mimic Men for Bruce King is baroque in structure, fugal in treatment of time, and filled with characters whose lives double, reflect or invert that of a narrator. The background of the novel being the racical tension between Indians and blacks in Trinidad. Everything the readers indentifies as Naipaul's ideas, psychology or desires is questioned or presented ironically (67).

Three of Naipaul's best works of fiction according to Bruce King are *In a Free State*, *Guerrillas* and *A Bend in The River*, which were written mostly about the outsiders, expatriates or aHen minorities those who have become uprooted from their origins, travelers without a home to which they can return, minorities at the mercy of others, those stranded by the with draw of protecting governments, former enemies brought together by the artificial boundaries of the new nations, and those who have come to the capitals of the world without the necessary skills and resources to service (83).

Bruce King feels that Naipaul's writing began to change again in the early 1980's. Which is visible in *The Two Narratives of Finding The Centre*. The

title is significant of the way the relation of the writers self to his work is now accepted as the answer to the problems of marginality, exile, and insecurity that characterized his earlier books (136).

The Enigma of Arrival is another of Naipaul's controversial novel as according to Bruce King. The theme of the novel is that each person has a different perspective, a unique vision, as a result of individual experience. In this novel, Naipaul has revised a well known form of early modernist fiction, the auto biographical novel (139).

In *A Turn in The South* as Bruce King observes, Naipaul re-examines his former prejudice towards the southern United States. Here he tries to see and understand a place that he had previously understood through received ideas. He expresses his interest to understand the south resistance to modernization and its pride in its culture when the culture was built upon the horror of slavery.

Naipaul's third book of Indian travels, *India A Million Mutinies Now*, as Bruce King feels, is written with his earlier Indian books in mind and is another revision, another re-seeing of what had been wrongly judged in the past. Where Naipaul earlier had sought a tradition but found decay and chaos, now he comes to accept that life consists of change. In the twenty seven years between his first visit to India and his India in this work, Naipaul and the India he observes have changed in analogous ways. They have changed from that accompanied independence to the many voices and perspectives of the post colonial.

2.2 Suman Gupta, *V.S.Naipaul*, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2010.

In this comprehensive study, Suman Gupta provides a critical evaluation of the works of V.S.Naipaul up to 1998, analyzing his ideological and artistic development over five decades within the numerous cultural contexts he has addressed. Features which cut across the broad corpus of Naipaul's works are highlighted: his attempts at comparative cultural evaluation, his reflections on

colonial and post colonial history, and the spiritual and political aspirations of individuals and communities. The cosmopolitan world Naipaul inhabits provides a variety of cultural perspectives from which Naipaul is able to express his concern about twentieth century uncertainties and the questionable effects of imperialism.

Suman Gupta opines that England forms a natural reference point in Naipaul's works as it is because of her impact on the colonial society and past of his homeland. India presents another obvious reference point for a Trinidadian Indian. Naipaul has written three substantial books and several articles about India. Besides, in the guise of a travel writer, Naipaul has also taken his preoccupations to other West Indian and South American countries. In the midst of Naipaul's investigation and exposition of these themes and preoccupations, there is that self awareness of being a writer of books with his peculiar sense of their sensuality and tangibility. This self awareness of Naipaul guides the manner in which narratorial perspectives are arranged, in which the forms are conceived, in which ultimately the social and political issues are presented.

Naipaul's self consciousness seeps beyond the committing of words to paper and enters the imaginative existence of his main protagonists. Characters in his books reflect the veneration for books which impinge upon their composition. It is in many ways a deep and true self consciousness. But Suman Gupta feels, it is also one that detracts from Naipaul's ostensible search for cultural 'truth' which Naipaul has repeatedly used as his defense against detractors, and championed against his rivals (2).

This book of Suman Gupta is a brief survey of Naipaul's published books between 1957 and 1998. An active link between the author and his works is well presumed. In *Miguel Street*, as Suman Gupta observes, one has the sanctioned beginning of the process of Naipaul's embodiment in books. It is a loosely connected collection of stories, each focused on a specific character who lives in a deprived neighborhood in Port of Spain (4).

The Suffrage of Elvira for Suman Gupta reveals, Naipaul's view of society and politics in forties and early fifties in Trinidad. Through this work Naipaul examines personages who reach the upper echelons of the colonial establishment in Trinidad (7)

Suman Gupta extensively discusses *A House for Mr. Biswas*, Naipaul's fourth and most successful book. This novel is an imaginative reconstruction of Naipaul's father Seepersad Naipaul's life. Seepersad Naipaul, like Mr. Biswas, came from a rural Hindu background, had somehow established himself as a journalist for the *Trinidad Guardian*, and aspired to be a writer of stories. Suman Gupta Quotes Naipaul's opinion about his father's collection of short stories *Gurudeva and other Indian Tales* (1943), Naipual writes in his prologue to an autobiography

"These stories celebrated Indian village life, and the Hindu rituals that gave grace and completeness to that life. They also celebrated elemental things, the order of the working day, the labour of the rice fields, the lighting of the cooking fire in the half walled gallery of a thatched hut, the preparation and eating of food (*Finding the Center* 42)

In Suman Gupta's opinion Seepersad Naipaul also shared Mr. Biswas's dissatisfaction with the Hindu community which defined him, and skepticism towards conservative Hinduism and its communal rituals and conventions. Though Naipaul wasn't aware of it at the time of writing *A House for Mr. Biswas* but had realized later and thus in his interviews and writings Naipaul mentions about how his father was victimized for criticizing animal sacrifices in Hindu rituals because of which he had a nervous breakdown.

(In the 1994 BBC *Face to Face* interview with Jeremy Isaacs, for instance and in *Prologue to an Autobiography* (*Finding the Center 73-81*).

While discussing Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*, Suman Gupta observes that it is the story of Ralph Singh, a person of Indian origin, whose ostensibly

autobiographical narrative moves effortlessly between the Caribbean island of his birth and London- put between the effortless shifts there are subtle changes of perspective which give meaning to the title of the novel (25).

Observing Naipaul's collection of short stories *A Flag on the Island* and considering the autobiographical elements in them, Suman Gupta divides the stories into three categories for the better understanding. In the first category he places those which seem to be extensions of his early fiction, which examine related themes and use by- now familiar narratorial ploys, and some of which were indeed written while the early fiction was being written. These stories are full characters from the Trinidad of Naipaul's childhood and most important of these *The Enemy* which gives a somewhat different view of Naipaul's mother from her characterization as Shama in *A House for Mr. Biswas*. In the second category, Suman Gupta includes the stories which focus primarily on English characters in England. The third category, Suman Gupta feels, is most significant which could include stories where Naipaul offers narratorial voices which emulate characters who are note omniscient or identifiable with the author.

In the concluding chapter of his book Suman Gupta writes extensively about Naipaul's writings about India. For Suman Gupta these writings of Naipaul precisely provide a useful overview of Naipaul's development as a whole. These writings reveal interesting insights into Naipaul's political and ideological commitments. Naipaul's depiction of Caribbean history is dense with his personal history which impresses of the Indian indentured laborer ancestry, and the childhood within an insular Hindu Trinidad community, and naturally throughout his writing career he has determinedly tried to understand India "The interest which began with regard to a largely known and mythical space in his personal history... and gradually concretized itself in subsequent visits and revisits, through an expanding range of encounters, through disappointments and reanalyzes, in indubitably a significant preoccupation across his career. (78)

Naipaul's writing on India have appeared at regular intervals throughout a long and accomplished career. Suman Gupta's survey of Naipaul conveys not only his specific views on India but also the general tenor of his preoccupations and reflections.

2.3 R N Sarkar : *India related Naipaul: A study in Art*, Sarup and Sons, New Delhi, 2004.

India Related Naipaul is a consistent study of Naipaul's art and as its author RN Sarkar himself claims that no controversy can arise, then some controversial points of Naipaul's reading of India and Islam are thoroughly and objectively explored in his work (R N Sarkar .... Cover page).

Naipaul's art is the subject of this work and the writer feels that it can be better explored in Naipaul's India related works. If three of his travelogues on India are facts, his master piece *A House for Mr.Biswas* is fiction. Sarkar feels that Naipaul has followed essentially a method of telling the truth in tolerance, though sometimes apparently tells harsh truths, yet truth all the same. Even while Naipaul denies to be an Indian Sarkar feels that Naipaul remains an Indian at heart.

All through this book wherever the question of Indianess appears Sarkar constantly states that Naipaul is perhaps more effective, more intimate and far more subtle. In this regard, Naipaul's India- related works uphold his Indian care and interest, though he appears bit rude in his reaction, but it is obviously the rudeness of a loving heart that wishes to see its homeland better.

Sarkar extensively discusses *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *An Area of Daskness*, *India a Wounded Civilization* and *India A Million Mutinies Now.* He feels that Naipaul's art and idea combine as his facts and fiction. The main difference between Naipaul's travel books and novels is a difference of form. The novel is formed into a story with a unity of action with a central figure, as a *A House for Mr. Biswas.* But a travelogue does not require any such unity, nor

a story organized around any such particular character. Naipaul's travel books yet contain infinite number of figures with the usual prospect of fictional adjustment.

2.4 Dr. Anil Kumar, *Naipaul, India and Indianess : A Critique,* Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi. (2013)

This book entitled *Naipaul India and Indianess : A Critique*, focus on Naipaul's depiction of India and Indianess. Description about Naipaul's longing and belonging is done with focus on his contributions to English language and literature. Reflections are also made on how Naipaul figures in the mirror of critics. Themes such as India and Indianess in Naipaul's point of view are analyzed.

All through the book the Author has tried to advocate one single fact that Naipaul is not a colonial, not an Indian, not a Trinidadian even. He is truly a citizen of self professed and self possessed, 'Universal civilization'. The book is full of quotations from both the primary source and secondary sources that the author has accessed.

2.5 Purabi Panwar, *Vs Naipaul : An anthology of recent criticism*, pencraft international Delhi, 2007.

This volume brings together some of the most recent revaluations of the multifaceted 'oeuvre' of VS Naipaul which comprise of his novels, short stories, travel writing, historical accounts, and varied essays. Focused on Naipaul's creative anxieties and strategies as much as on his provocative discourses on diverse nations, cultures, histories and communities across the globe. It closely critiques most of Naipaul's major texts. The anthology also explores the extent of fixities and ambivalences in Naipaul's much talked about Eurocentrism. His insights into and distortions of the past, and his assimilations, appropriations' through the deployment of the telling detail and the brilliant prose. At once exciting and instructive the volume richly investigates the Naipaul's ceaseless

endeavor to come to terms with the modern man's predicament in today's highly tangled scenario (Cover page).

Purabi Panwar, in her introduction to the book objects, Naipaul's claim "I am the sum of my books.... Each book intuitively sensed and, and in the case of fiction, intuitively worked out, stands on what has gone before, and grows out of it. "I feel that at any stage of my literary career it could have been said that the last contained all the others". for Purabi, Naipaul the writer is certainly the sum of all his books: but his observation that each of his books carries much less conviction. The observation may well relate to the increasing range of Naipaul's creative anxieties and strategies with every new book he wrote but not to its quality (p.13).

The author briefly discusses books that belong to the top shelf of large corpus of Naipaul's literary production. This book on Naipaul is well organized and mounted which make an enjoyable and rewarding reading for Naipaul readers.

Most important part of the book is that it contains (the) Dileep Padgonkar's interview with Naipaul. This interview throws light on Naipaul's maturity in understanding India which Padgaonkar calls 'An Area of Awakening'. Chandra B.Joshi's article about the autobiographical element in *A House for Mr. Biswas* is a handy one. Fukrual Alam's article 'The Enigma of VS Naipual' is worth reading, which conveys that Naipaul can be looked into as a very great writer not in his travel writing and studies of other cultures and races but in his novels and his autobiographical writings. He has earned his noble prize through these works for there is much to admire in his fiction and self exploration (Fukrual Alam in Purabi Panwar).

2.6 Amod Kumar Rai: *V S Naipaul : A study of his nonfictions*, Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, 2008.

Amod Kumar Rai, is of the opinion that Naipaul asserts a certain distinction by having some special features distinguishing sufficiently his writing from those

of his contemporaries and predecessors. Naipaul's nonfictions undergo several phases of research, interviewing and evaluation not only of the facts he collects but also of the preconceived notions and judgments about a particular phenomenon.

As an author Naipaul's sole purpose is 'a commitment to deliver the truth'. This has been done more authentically in his nonfictions than in fictions. Nonetheless it is his fictional works which are explored, discussed and scrutinized in exuberance. Amod Kumar Rai feels that Naipaul's nonfictions, by and far have remained aloof. Only a few intermittent papers and remarks have appeared discussing either the reputed trilogy on India or the duo on Islamic countries. The present book, in such a dismal condition, is immensely a promising one. The book not only ruminates all the nonfictional works of Naipaul but also traces the development and perfection of nonfiction as the latest literary genre to be developed. The book doesn't promise any hypothetical judgment of the nonfictions but it offers a feature analysis of it.

2.7 Namrata Rathore Mahanta, *V S Naipaul: The Indian Trilogy*, Altantic Publishers New Delhi, 2004.

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This study breaks fresh ground in exploring V S Naipaul's three books about his travels in India, treating these as a series whose meanings emerge only when considered together. The book focuses on the inextricable intertwining of Naipaul's writings with his personal experiences. The book demonstrates how Naipaul's critique of Indian culture and politics emerges from his diasporic world view. Namrata Rathore Mahanta analyses Naipaul's perception of women's differences in a rapidly changing society. The book is an insight full reading for those interested in Naipaul's career-long engagement with India.

According to Namrata Rathore, Naipaul's initial bitterness generated a unique sense of detachment, which in addition to being essential to any original quest has yielded transparency to his struggle to establish a connection with

India. Namrata Rathore is of the opinion that Naipaul has attempted to understand the country against its cultural back drop and has made a well ordered search for the roots. This attitude of Naipaul makes Namrata Rathore to feel that his writings on India are not only the outcome of his quest for India but are also a unique record of the making of a diasporic writer.

Namrata Rathore has minutely analyzed Naipaul's three books on India, *An Area of Darkness, India A Wounded Civilization*, and *India A Million Mutinies Now*. While in her observation Namrata Rathore accounts, the broken dreams of Naipaul in his initial encounter and his confrontation with the history and his questions of marginality.

This book attempts to study how Naipaul finally resolves his problematic equation with India. Namrata Rethore concludes her book with the opinion that Naipaul's earlier vituperation against Indian culture and politics emerges to form a part of his diasporic world view. By reading his works on India as diasporic writings and as a series we can perceive the maturing of Naipaul's diasporic consciousness.

2.8 REVIEW OF ARTICLES ON NAIPAUL

1. "VS Naipaul : A case of Bizarre Reputation"

By CD Narasimhaiah in *Essays in Commonwealth Literature*, Heirloom of Multiple Heritage, Pencraft International publications, New Delhi, 1995, p.214-233.

This article of CD Narasimhaiah on Naipaul is a result of his intellectual and personal encounter with Naipaul. When CD Narasimhaiah had been to deliver a lecture on 'Naipaul and the East Indian Experience' at the University of the West Indies, Trinidad in 1984, he speaks of his personal encounter with Naipaul where Naipaul, has expressed "I am profoundly Indian in my feeling, profoundly Indian in my sensibility.... But not in my observation'. CD Narasimhaiah attacks

him for making such a statement by saying that 'observation is not enough for a writer, no not even for a newspaper correspondent (214).

CD Narasimhaiah, One of the bitter critics of Naipaul jolts down at random from the middle passages of Naipaul *India A Wounded Civilization.*

'Social inquiry is outside the Indian tradition. Formal politics became an affair of head counting'.

"The crisis of India is not political, it is not economic, it is part of a larger crisis, that of a decaying civilization".

"India press.... matched the triviality of the politics" it became a part of the Indian anarchy".

"India is without an ideology and that was the failure of Gandhi and India together."

"The scientist returning from abroad regains the security of his caste, identify and the world is once more simplified."

CD Narasimhaiah feels that these statements cast in the hetorical mould of a self-hypnotized prophet. CD Narasimhaiah has a question to ask why does he not write about England or America which Naipaul knows infinitely better than India, Africa, Central America or the Islamic states? CD Narasimhaiah very much quotes the words of Naipaul himself who in an interview had said, 'England is much written about, America is much written about. It is dangerous to write about such societies...'(221).

Speaking about the India related works of Naipaul, CD Narasimhaiah observes 'If I may permit myself a little levity, Naipaul's writing is the sophisticated equivalent of the cumulative image of bullfighting bear-baiting and gladiatorial contests, with which European society entertained its steak-fed, sensation-seeking spectators'(227).

2. ***"Naipaul in India"***

By HH Anniah Gowda in *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* Ed., Arthur Revenscroft Oxford University Press. London, 1978.

This Article of Anniah Gowda critically analyzes Naipaul's first travelogue on India, *AN AREA OF DARKNESS.* Referring to the facts that Naipaul, who visited India sixty years after his maternal grandfather left as an indentured laborer for Trinidad, has written a readable but negative book about India.

Anniah Gowda has justly felt that reading *AN AREA OF DARKNESS* is like entering a room without windows and ventilators but commanding a nice prospect, but he asks "How long would one like to stay, indeed how long could one stay in an airless room?" (164).

While in Madras, Naipaul having lost himself in describing defecation, does not have a word for the lovely beach which gives a majestic background to the buildings on the Marina. Anniah Gowda feels that, Naipaul in his personal reminiscences, has chosen to shut his eyes to the India which in not defecating.

3. ***"Indian critics on Naipaul"***

By Arun K Mohanty in 'Sateertha Bulletin vol 6, Winter 1995 pp.6-13.

Arun K Mohanty has listed out the Indian scholars and critics who have responded to the works of Naipaul, both fiction and nonfiction. Mohanty has attempted to quote briefly from these who have presented their opinion about Naipaul's India, both positive and negative.

Article is full of quotes and opinions (ideas) about Naipaul's image of India. Mohanty quotes CD Narasimhaiah's opinion about Naipaul's *AN AREA OF DARKNESS* saying "has not shown any conspicuous ability to penetrate the deeper layers of the Indian mind" (6).

While Naipaul is accused of uttering many half truths, Sudha Rai in her book entitled '*VS Naipaul: A study in Expatriate Sensibility (1982)* feels that

Naipaul's writings on India "have been the subject of a colossal misunderstanding" (7).

Mohanty refers to the remarks of TRS Sharma when he tries to answer to the question as to why Naipaul's remarks on India so irritate Indians: "He has many unpleasant things to tell about us, and he says them without reprieve or extenuation. ...Naipaul, an expatriate writer has every right to tell"... unpalatable truths, tell them slant, be a prophet, a soothsayer of doomwatcher, and his brand of apocalyptic at times can be a little to macabre, too uncomfortable for the genteel taste". He raises an important point that whether the critics read Naipaul the way he is meant to be read (7).

Mohanty mentions about Bidhubhusan Das's essay entitled "Demystification of India", where he evaluates Naipaul's Indian trilogy. *An Area of Darkness*, *India A Wounded Civilization* and *India a Million Mutinies Now.* Das according to Mohanty has observed a change in the tone and attitude born out of Naipaul's successive visit to India.

In contrast with Nissim Ezekiel's opinion that Naipaul's India "peopled, packed with a kind of life which is death, a negation, distortion and degradation from which Naipaul is glad to escape", Kimbahune feels that the "Sheer joy of meeting people and seeing new lands, which successful travelogues communicate, is missing in Naipaul's travelogues". (7)...

As said earlier Mohanty has mentioned some of the important critical works on Naipaul, such as Nondita Mason's *The fiction of VS Naipaul (1986),* Skashi Kamra's *The Novels of VS Naipaul* (1986), and Chandra B Joshi's V.S.Naipaul : *The Voice of ExHe (1994)* which would prove handy to study the themes and techniques of VS Naipaul.

Chapter: Three

IMAGE OF INDIA IN WORLD LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Image of India in German Literature

3.3. Image of India in English Literature

3.4. The Image of India in Russian Literature

3.5. Perceiving India through the works of Indian writers and conclusion

Chapter: Three

IMAGE OF INDIA IN WORLD LITERATURE

A symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole. "Image" refers to the generalized patterns of images that form the world of human representations in recurrent motifs, passing through the history of all culture. Since "Images" are rooted in the collective unconscious, they may be conceived through the psychic activity of any individual, be it in the form of dreams, art works, the ancient monuments of religious activity, or the contemporary images of commercial advertising. Such Images as the "innocent babe," the "unheeded prophet," the "philosopher's stone," and many others which also have their source in the primitive darkness of the unconscious, are repeated in numerous literary works of cultural creation.

3.1. Introduction

In the twenty first century every sixth human being will be an India. India is likely to emerge as the second largest consumer market in the world. The Indian economy is already the fourth largest in terms of purchasing power. It is one among the top ten countries in overall gross national product. The world's largest democracy is a nuclear power. The Indian Diaspora is the second largest in the world. Indians have emerged as the richest community in USA, UK and even in Gulf. Whether the world wants to or not, it has to inevitably interact with Indians.

Therefore it is important to understand with greater clarity and honesty than before what is India and what it is to be an Indian in the global perspective.

Such inquiries in the past have been handicapped because of two factors. The first is the stereotyped hysterical tone one quotes Marks Twain saying.

"This is indeed India! The land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty of genii and giants and alluding lamps, of tigers and elephants the country of a hundred nation and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birth place of human speech mother of history, grandmother of legend, great grandmother of tradition..."[1]

3.2. Image of India in German Literature

The German philosopher Max Muller who spent a lifetime studying Indian play argued with great fashion that

"If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow in some parts a very paradise on earth I should point to India and if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life, not for this life only, but a transfigural and eternal life again I should point to India".[2]

Many German missionaries were stationed in India. They indulged not in the propagation of Christianity but also in linguistic and philological studies, because they were also convinced that only through language they would gain access to the section of Indian society, which were their targets for the conversion programmes.

Some of the famous German indologists of this period are Paul Deussen, Joseph Dahlmann, Richard Garbe, Alfred Hildebrandt, Richard Schmidt, and

Leopold . Many books were written about Hinduism and Buddhism. The fine arts of India like music, dance and drama were evaluated by the indologists, not surprisingly from a German perspective. Oscar Loerke called Neumann the 'Buddha of the West' and said that 'through Neumann the Indians speak German'. The works of these German indologists did have an impact on the German poets who took up to Indian motifs in their works. It should, however, be pointed out that a critical analysis of the German indology from an Indian perspective has yet to be done.

The Fact is that Tagore was accorded a mixed reception. On the other hand, there was a 'Tagore wave' which left its impact on poets like Graf Hermann Kyserling and Stefan Zwen,[3]

Indian religions were quite popular in certain circles of the German society during those days. In 1913 Rudolf Steiner who was the secretary of the Theosophical society, started the Anthrosophic Society. He also created a new type of school which continue its work even today in the West Germany under the name Steinerschule. Associations of Buddhism were also established in several German cities during this time.

At the universities, India was a topic of research in various filed of scholarship. The rediscovery of ancient Indian in these sources moulded the respective images of authors.

The fact should not be overlooked that authors like Gjellerup and Keyserling had even read the books on India written by the English. This proves once again that the Germans got to know India through the medium of English.

Besides, information from the books, there were other factors which played considerable role. In this connection, it must be mentioned that Keyserling and Zweig were particularly influenced by the 'Tagore-wave' in Germany. Both had personal contacts with Tagore and appreciated his contribution towards finding solutions for the intellectual crisis of Europeans.

Journey to India was another factor which made it possible for these authors to personally get acquainted with India and her people. Only Gjellerup and Mauthner did not have the advantage to broaden.

All those authors who had a pre-conceived image of India based upon their readings of German indological texts, visited India only to be disillusioned because the image they had formed did not correspond to the reality. These disappointing experiences were, however, positively used in their literary creations with the passage of times. Their interest in and for India was real or restricted only to an intellectual game.

The authors project their images of India in various forms, for Dauthendey and Bonsels India is just a medium to express their philosophy of life, Keyserling wishes to attain self-realization through India. On the other hand, Gjellerup seeks to acquaint the European reader with the life and preaching's of Buddha. For the personality and teachings of Buddha become a suitable subject for explicating his view on language as a system.

In Gjellerup's works ancient India and her religions form the general theme whereby emphasis is laid on Buddhism. The author change historical facts to such an extent that his works, instead of depicting Buddhism and Buddha's life are reduced to mere entertainment value. Even Zweig and Mauthner have borrowed extensively, but modified Indian thoughts. In the case of most authors, the typical image of Indians, forms an indirect part of their presentation of India.

Most of these authors have pre-occupied themselves with ancient India resulting in a feeble picture of present India. That is the specific political factor in Indian history, namely, that the nation suffered under colonial rule is registered but not given its due. A criticism of the English colonial rules is hardly to be found.

The image of 'India' in German literature around the twentieth century are complex. For every individual author, contact with India meant yet another

window for developing his personality, but without disowning the cultural traditions of his own world. In this connection they took from India what they thought was most useful to them because their aim was not to present an authentic image of India. That during this process they nourished the already existing prejudices about India in the minds of average readers did not concern them much. The works of these authors were full of positive and negative elements. "They came, they saw and misunderstood", we can understand them only by pointing out to the fact that in a period when there was a considerable intellectual vacuum in Germany, India gave these authors an intellectual development aid.[4]

The Indian insights and ideas might help us in discovering a unified vision of life and ideas, an integral humanism and the ultimate truth of human existence. "A Passage to India is truly the search for, a lost language of wisdom".[5]

Putting it in Aurobindonian words, "India is not merely a geographical entity, a physical material land mass, an intellectual concept, but a spiritual power and in the great evolutionary leap forward, India would take the lead".[6] Implicit in this statement is the general assumption that India has to play a crucial role of a reconciler in a fragmented, confused and divided world. This is the India that matters. This drives us to find out how many westerners try to understand the meaning and message of India. Very little is known about the spiritual landscape of India in Western literature, and whatever little is known, opinions are sharply divided, pendulum swinging from one extreme to another.

3.3. Image of India in English Literature

Looking retrospectively, India had been drawn into the West's ambit in 1746 and had a place in the world in 1897 as a portion of the British empire. In the encounter between India and the West, which Arnold Toynbee considers to be one of the most important events of modern history, three stages may be marked : (i) a stage of conflict and misunderstanding: (ii) a stage of accommodation and understanding: and (iii) a yet unachieved stage of the law of

service, sacrifice and toleration. It is not for us to speculate on the nature and content of these stages, but the point which is intended to make is that a body of Anglo-Indian literature which appeared failed to grasp the meaning of India. Most of the writers remained busy in projecting the dubious reflections about India, as there is something mumbo-jumbo about its landscape. The image of India which has been focused in Rudyard Kipling's novels and short stories such as *The Jungle Books* and *Kim* seem to be determined by his belief in the superiority of western civilization. Very different is E.M. Forster's classic novel, *A Passage of India* which is a critical and creative examination of British rule in India. A lover of the human race, his philosophy was to "connect : only connect the prose and passion and both will be exalted and the human love will be seen at its height".[7]

Forster visited India in 1912, 1921 and 1945. He acquired a deep understanding of the Indian psychology which he had transmitted into his work of art. In the romantic symbolism of mosque, cave and temple, in *A Passage to India*, he gave it a new life, vision and form.

Here Aziz and Fielding attempt to establish relationship with each other but fail in their efforts About the personal relationship of Fielding and Aziz, Allen observes : "And thus as the novel ends. Fielding and Aziz whose friendship had been reborn in the tank, are prevented from consummate union as the earth speak out and say'; No, not yet (not in time)' and the sky says, 'No, not here (not in space)', perhaps, it is at a mystic level that the harmony has been achieved in the festival scene when the boats collide, the mist is cleared and the awakening takes place".[8]

There are enough evidences to support the point of view that Forster has been constantly haunted by the idea of permanence in the midst of constant change. Beneath mutability, he discerns the spirit which is enduring. His emphasis has been on the discovery of true self, where each individual can develop freely his real life and also participate in the eternal life.

Perhaps Aldous Huxley makes a considerable appeal to the Indian mind especially because of his ability to grasp the meaning and the message of India. True, in *Jesting Pilate* he says: "India is depressing as no other country I have ever known. If I were an Indian millionaire, I would leave all my money for the endowment of an Atheistic Mission". But in the light of later work and development 'he might well be claimed as a neo-Brahmin'. He writes that "to win the weary world to a sense of purpose, a tradition at once transcendental and universal is needed and it is perhaps not a bad thing that is the midst of the devouring activities of the West there should be a few Brahmanising souls."[9]

The ontological mind of Huxley was deeply concerned about man's destiny in the midst of conflicting ideologies in this super-technical world. He foresaw disaster of mankind in the forms of totalitarianism, pollution of environment and struggled tenaciously for awakening mankind to avert the impending doom. In an age whose things was dominated by notions of environmental determinism in its Freudian, Marxian or Behaviorist forms, he insisted on leading a life with perceptual awareness.

Huxley articulated a vision of new social order in the context of the Indian cultural ethos. In *A Note on Gandhi*, (Published in *Vishaya Bharati : A Memorial Volume*, 1949) he wrote.

"For this amphibian being on the borderline between the animal and spiritual, what sort of social, political and economic arrangements are the most appropriate ? To this question Gandhi gave a simple and eminently sensible answer. Men, he said, should do their actual living and working in communities of a size commensurate with their bodily and mental stature, communities small to permit of genuine government and assumption of personal responsibilities federated into large units in such a way that the temptation to abuse grate power should not arise".[10]

In *Ends and Means*, he says that "the political road to a better society is the road of decentralization and responsible self-government".[11] Like Gandhi, Huxley visualizes an ideal rural society in which the individual can develop his maximum potentialities and learn to live in harmony with the nature and laws of the evolutionary growth. A pacifist like Gandhi, he believed in the essential unity of man. His programme of decentralization is closely associated with his theory of mysticism and is derived from the consciousness that all individuals are ultimately at one with the absolute.

Huxley's ideas on decentralization have found concentrated expression in *Ends and Means*, *After Many A Summer, Brave New World, Revised and Island.* In *After Many A Summer Dies*, a Swan, Propter abandons urban life and lives in a small bungalow set in the midst of eucalyptus trees and completely relies on his own resources. Sadly, neither Gandhi's nor Huxley's plan was adopted, so much the worse for us and our descendents. A brief look at Huxley's trek to transcendence, the unknown, whose reality is forever manifest and present, reveals that he looked for an intellectual solution to the problems of life. But soon he discovered the inadequacy of ideas to provide any satisfactory answers to these ultimate questions. He realized that it is only through intuition that an integrated vision of a whole, a unified vision of synoptic reality can be obtained.

Huxley's search takes the form of a self-quest, a general pre-occupation with the self which distinguishes him from Blake and other Christian mystics and establishes his affinity with the mysticism of 'upanishads'. He was deeply fascinated by Vedantic and Buddhistic ways of life which offered him solution to his long-standing problems. Fortunately, it was in 1937 that Huxley and Gerald Heard moved from Europe to settle in California and formed a group which included Charlie Chaplin, Krishnamurthy, Anita Laos, Paulette Goddard, Christopher Isherwood, Edwin Hubble and Greata Garbo. He became a distinguished member of the Vedantic society. In California he was directly

exposed to Yoga and Vedntic philosophy under the guidance of Swami Prabhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who developed his personality along the positive lines of spiritual faith.

3.4. The Image of India in Russian Literature

Afanasi Nikitin's *Voyage Beyond Three Seas* (1466-1472) is acknowledged as a master-piece of ancient Russain literature, and *Indian Impressions* (1956), written by one of the leading Russian writers of this century, Ilya Ehrenburg, and is considered to be a literary work in its own right. These are interesting works not merely because they serve as a king of mirror in which we can see our reflection, but also because their comparison would give us an insight into the transformations in the concept of 'India' in the Russian mind with the passage of time.

Nikitin was in India for three years (1469-1472). Ilya Ehrenburg came to India in 1956 on a one month visit. He mainly visited the big cities and some centers of ancient and medieval Indian culture.

Nikitin writes: "At Bidar, Horses and various goods are sold : brocade, silk, and all kinds of other goods: black people too are on sale there. Nothing else is sold. As for food nothing is sold but vegetables. There are no goods for the land of Rus".[12]

At another place he writes : " There is a place- the tomb of Sheikh Ala-ud-din at Alland where a fair is held once a year and people from all over the Indian country come to trade for 10 days... Horses are brought here for sale, as many as 20,000 heads, and all kinds of other goods too. It is the best fair in the land of Hindustan".[13]

More significant aspect of the book is that Nikitin vividly described the life of the Indian common people, their way of living, habits, customs, etc. He was a keen observer and he had the opportunity to mix with the common people, though partially because the circumstances forced him to do so. In fact, Nikitin

seems to have been the only one of the early European travelers to have mixed with the common people.

Nikitin, before he came to India, had hardly any idea about the country. Hence, whatever he saw in this unknown country became a subject of his curiosity and description. The climate, the plants, the elephants, the bare-footed people, their black skin, naked children, the large number of Hindu gods, the temples in fact, anything that seemed unusual or exotic to him found a place in his description.

Ilya Ehrenburg's sphere of interest was completely different. He was not interested in the exotic, probably because he had read a lot about India and travelled extensively throughout the world. He was interested in understanding the essence of India, its people. The first and the foremost thing that caught Ehrenburg's eye was the contradictions of the life in India. It was not only the economic contradictions between the rich and the poor—which, incidentally, had been reflected in Nikitin's work also, but also, the contradictions that have penetrated into the way of life itself and have become its integral part. Ilya Ehrenburg, for example, mentions the organic unity between the tradition and the modern India. He writes : "Everything that in Europe would be a crying contradiction seems natural in the Indian setting. This country is living simultaneously in the past, the present and the future. If you fail to understand this, you will find it impossible to understand either the Five Year Plans, or the religious processions or the thoughts and aspirations of the people".[14]

Both Nikitin and Ehrenburg described the glaring disparity between the haves and the have-nots. Nikitin wrote: "The countrymen are very poor but the boyars are rich and live in luxury".[15] He gave a vivid description of the extravagant life style of the Kings and the courtiers as well as the acute poverty in which common people lived. Ehrenburg discussed this problem in much greater detail and with much more depth. Notwithstanding all his previous knowledge about

India and his extensive travels to other under-developed countries, Ehrenburg was extremely shocked by the extent to which poverty prevailed in this country; "In Madras, I visited these homes of dock workers. Sometimes two or three families live in a single tiny dark room: the sick live here and the women bear their children in the same room. Harder still is the life of the poor in Calcutta. I confess, there were moments when I could look neither at the azure sky nor the wonderful trees, nor at the beauty which bounded around me –I felt so crushed by the weight of human sorrow".[16]

However, unlike Nikitin, Ehrenburg does not limit himself only to the description of the poverty, but also tries to go deep into the roots of the problem. Time and again he refers back to the history of India, with which he is well acquainted, and comes to the conclusion that the colonial exploitation during the British was the main cause of India's misery. "It seems that no country in the world has been subjected to so many injustices as India. The British robbed her and lived on her riches for two hundred years. At the same time they spoke about her scorn-fully as a country of abject poverty, pestilence and filth."[17] and,"Western philanthropists tried to hold the Indians themselves responsible for their miserable state. They said nothing about the unprecedented exploitation of India by the West, the poverty of the people was explained by the fictitious 'over-population'. They did not ask the colonizers why they were ruining the country but wondered how Indian women dared give birth to children. And this despite the fact that statistics show that the growth of population in Europe had proceeded at a rate double that of India."[18] Ehrenburg has expressed his profound shock and indignation to this shameless Western attitude. His reaction was very sharp. He says: "If there is no limit to the baseness to which man can sink."[19]

Ehrenburg's despair on account of the poverty in India, however, does not make him pessimistic about the future of the country. He simultaneously notices the process of development, the positive changes that are taking place in India.

He wrote : "I was happy to see factories, houses, hospitals and schools being constructed. In the old days life was measured in India in hundreds, if not thousands of years away. Now Five Year Plans are being carried out and even a newcomer can feel the country going forward... Just a quarter of a century ago certain idle Europeans were arguing the question: When does Indian history end with the Guptas or with the Great Moghuls? Today even an adolescent knows that the history of India is being written daily by her people."[20]

Another field of Ehrenburg's interest was the art and literature of the ancient and modern India. He was stunned, in particular, by the beauty and harmony of the Ajanta and Ellora caves and the high aesthetic sense of the ancient Indian artists and sculptors. He was particularly impressed by the humaneness of the Indian art. In his words, "It is the people, human beings who peep out at the visitors from the walls of the Ajanta caves."[21] Another aspect which Ehrenburg considers to be extremely important is the relevance of the ancient Indian art for the modern life. "The ancient art of India appeared comprehensible and near to me not only because like all great art it has withstood the test of time, but also because it is connected with the work of modern artists too and with the life of the country... the art of Ajanta seems to us living, contemporary art."[22] About the Indian literature from the most ancient times right down to our own days-what astounded Ehrenburg was "the blending of life and the inner-most recesses of the soul, the merging of poetry with philosophy, of satire with lyricism, of social analysis with the laying bare of the internal world of man."[23]

Afanasi Nikitin, being a merchant, was understandably not interested in such intricate problems of art and literature. Even his account of the day-to-day life of the people, though vivid, is not above error or delusion. These errors are probably due to lack of background knowledge about India, the language barrier and the author's tendency to generalise the isolated or local phenomena. For example, at one place he writes, "They drink neither wine nor mead, while a little later he says... wine is made in big coconuts and beer is brewed from

tatna.[24] The contradiction between the two statements is obvious, unless the wine was produced only for export. Another example: "The Indians eat no flesh at all-no beef, mutton, fowl, fish or pork, although they have a great many pigs."[25] Such errors of observation, however, do not minimise the great significance of his travelogue. His account of India was the first authentic record of the life in India by a Russian. Moreover, it has a special historical importance because the author was an impartial, dispassionate eye-witness and his version was not distorted by any kind of selfish or other motivations. We may mention here also the fact that Afanasi Nikitin visited India long before Vasco de Gama reached here.

Although there is a big gap of about 500 years between the visits of Afanasi Nikitin and Ilya Ehrenburg, what is common between them is the general friendly attitude towards India. As Ehrenburg says, "Recent years have seen the birth of Indo-Soviet friendship. Our two peoples have never fought each other. It is true the we did not know each other well but the Russians have always evinced a keen interest in India and have always sympathized with the Indian people".[26] Afanasi Nikitin's "*Voyage Beyond Three Seas*" and Ilaya Ehrenburg's *"Indian Impression"* prove this point.

3.5. Perceiving India through the works of Indian writers and conclusion

If the 'image of India', some of our Indian authors reflect in their work has been determined by Western, and more especially, British perceptions of their country, then it is the image of India as seen from afar that requires our first attentions. By now, much of this may seem like territory well-trodden enough, but it is worthy of recapitulation here because it is from precisely this vantage that a number of important Indian writers, or writers who claim to speak for India, have come to view their country. Whether it is from a foreign perspective or not, for the authors we are concerned with, writing about India is

very often an exercise which contains a large element of the imaginative. Maunier mentions that both native and foreign writers in the colonial situation "are merely interpreters and as such have need of explanation".[27] Singer implies the same, although he is speaking of India's traditional literati and not their more modern descendants:

...(Their) Interpretation give important clues to the self-image of a culture and its normative principles...(but they) do not give an accurate history of the culture or a realistic description of behaviour.[28]

Indeed, when it comes to writing about India many are the occasion where objectivity and dispassionate appraisal are singularly absent. For this reason it seems wiser to discount the absolute validity of the observations involved and to concentrate instead on why these writers perceive India as they do. As we ourselves shall see, it is the psychological processes of the imagination that ultimately decide which observations will go into the composition of the whole picture the 'image of India.'

Robert Redfield has posed himself a question :

...(How) can the mind take hold of so large, complex and changing a thing as a civilization?

Importantly, however, he has gone part of the way to find a solution :

To think of civilization requires the making of choices: the rejection of something in favour of something else. To handle something as large as a civilization the mind needs those mental economies that stretch the truth and so make truth more plain.[29]

Thus, in perceiving India, the cognitive faculties are forced to select a number of images which, taken together, comes to signify "a very large identity otherwise impossibly diffuse".[30] This is, we might add, in conformity with a sociological rule of thumb noticed by Mannheim:

We start by denoting or defining groups by convenient signs because we are not able to deal with every object with which we come into contract.[31]

Every foreign observer of another culture suffers from these misapprehensions, but they are apt to lead to even more serious consequences if that observer is a writer. For by the power of the written word these misperceptions gain an authority and an audience they would otherwise lack. Nirad C Chaudhuri himself is aware of the difficulty, though, as we shall see, he might have done better to take his own advice :

On account of its vastness and variety, India is treacherous ground for all foreign writers.[32]

At any rate, what concerns us in this situation is that there are essentially two foreign images of India that we have to deal with. According to one's bent, India may be seen as heaven or hell: a dream or a nightmare. Despite Koestler's case, most often one particular image will gain ascendance in an individual's imagination.

India was, and to some extent still is, the unwitting recipient of these stereological longings. As Nirad Chaudhuri has written, there was another image of India that catered to people's:

... spiritual aspirations in the far-off, away from a reality where they were always meeting with disappointment.

To be sure, the liberation India promised was often more financial than spiritual and if until now we have remained unconvinced about the authenticity of "the image", it only needs a moment's thought to realize how indispensable these ideas were to the general moment of European expansion.

Although sympathetic image of India was to continue in the work of some orientalists and in the work of writers like E.M. Forster, another more sinister image of India began to pervade the British imagination. Chaudhuri, for instance,

thinks that, if anything, the initial British bias towards India was a favourable one :

But this idolatry broke down as the European came into direct contact with the country and its people.[33]

Or as Louis Dumont has lamented :

The discovery (of India) itself destroyed the very hope which led to it.[34]

The pejorative image of India was required because the native threatened the colonizer's very identity. What the civilized man fears in the uncivilized is the more unpleasant parts of himself which he ignore for the sake of his self-esteem. When he is forced to confront the "savage", he must, as well, own up to those characteristics which he has expelled from his own self-image, One his first visit to India, V.S. Naipaul, for example, Speaks of :

The delirium of seeing certain aspects of myself magnified out of recognition.[35]

He records also how :

Hysteria had been my reaction, and a brutality dictated by a new awareness of myself as a whole human being, and a determination, touched with fear to remain what I was.[36]

In this connection Nehru has also had some interesting thoughts. Thinking about the image of India he possessed in his own mind he wrote:

There are terrifying glimpses of dark corridors which seem to lead back to primeval night.[37]

The greater part of British characterizations of India and Indians does indeed follow a particular pattern and process which it is not difficult to discern.

Due to Kipling's upbringing in India he had a better grasp of India than most, but the great majority of British writers on India did not possess even this

small advantage. Although whatever success these writers enjoyed was predicated upon their supposed ability to do so, they could not present the 'real India' they so often declared to because they were interlopers who could only view India superficially from the outside. And here again we come up against the epistemological. Dimensions of viewing a culture other than one's own. There are a thousand definitions of the word "culture" but one, the most significant for the individual is "to enshroud him in a system of collective defense". Recently, some psychoanalysts have gone so far as to suggest a linkage between neurotic and depressive disorders and a lack of what they call "cultural fit".[38] As Berger suggests, the reality and identity of the individual is a social construction. The images which our own society infuses in us from birth are an essential par this sheltering canopy:

The symbolic universe protects the individual from ultimate terror by bestowing legitimacy upon the protective structures of the institutional order.[39]

When the foreign observer comes face to face with the symbols, and meanings of another society, the reaction may take the form the form of a jolting cultural shock. He may be left "anomic" and "exposed alone to the onslaught of a nightmare" [40] the terrifying "horror" of Captain Kurtz. Two episodes from British writing on India serve to illustrate this point: the incident at the Malabar Caves in Forster's *A Passage to India* and Tarvin's panic-stricken flight from the *Temple of the cow's Mouth,* in Kipling's *Naulakha.* By now, we will recognize the significance of the fact that both incidents occur in utter darkness. But what happens in these two tales? It is perhaps significant; too, that Forster offers no accounting of what takes place in the caves. Indeed, he cannot, since to do so require an imaginative leap to embrace the meanings of another culture and in the process the loss of the identity his own society has conferred. A.J. Greenberger, however, has tried to define what happens to the protagonists of Kipling and Forster. The episodes at the caves and temple, he says:

Represent the horror of absolute vacuum in which human ambition, love, hate, even religion vanish as undifferentiated particles down an eternal drain.[41]

Benita Parry believes Tarvin's flight occurs because in the temple he realizes that India was "a denial of all he conceives of as important".[42] She notices, as well, that individual identity is contingent upon its social underpinnings. Mrs. Moore's and Adela Quested's terror arises from the fact that they have been "programmed to receive the stimuli selected by their own society".[43]

It is not our intention to examine British writings on India so minutely but these two accounts are useful for our specific purpose. They go a long way to explain why India often evokes such violent and deeply felt reactions in literary depictions and in real life. Correspondingly, they explain why the foreign 'image of India' has so often been so emphatically negative. When the bearer of the images of the culture comes too close to those of another, it is as if the security either could afford is cancelled out. The observer is left gaping into the existential void. In that excruciating instant he realizes that all his vaunted ideals and the self he loves so dearly are worth less than nothing. Few, if any, can stand in such a crucible for long. Two of our Indian writers have had similar experiences. Nirad Chaudhuri mentions of his first visit to England:

> As long as I remained in England a persistent trance-like effect never left me and nothing seemed quite real.[44]

V.S. Naipaul, who is racially Indian but culturally Western, includes the following variation on this theme in his *An Area of Darkness:*

> To be an Indian in England was distinctive, in Egypt it was more so. Now in Bombay - I entered a shop or a restaurant and awaited a special quality of response and there was nothing. It was like being denied part of my reality. Again and again I was caught. I was faceless. I might sink without a trace into that Indian crowd. I had been made by Trinidad and England: recognition of my

difference was necessary to me. I felt the need to impose myself and didn't know how.[45]

those writings that claim to deliver the genuine India do not inform us so much about India but where the writer stands in relation to India. If we read the image of India rather than spontaneously relying on the verisimilitude of the various features of India that are presented, we gain an appreciation of the writer as a product of his culture. If he displays excessive sympathy it is likely to assume that he is either socially or psychologically marginal in terms of his society. If, on the other hand, India meet with nothing but categoric disapprobation in his work, it may be safe to assume that he is secure and comfortable with the behavior his own cultures expects of him.

As we long ago intimated, a number of Indian writers, or writers who profess that they can legitimately speak on India's behalf, have been infected with this exterior perspective. The image of India they offer in their work is the somber picture of India as seen from afar. The purpose of the preceding discussion, which in reality constitute no more than a lengthy, but necessary preamble, has been to demonstrate how and why these perceptions took shape in the minds of their original expositors. Among the Indian heirs to this tradition are such writers as Nirad Chaudhuri, V.S. Naipaul and, to a lesser extent, Dom Moraes and Ved Mehta. Although important qualifications are needed in this last instance, in a sense their work has been required by the obvious failure of foreign writers to give us the goods on the real India. Ostensibly their ability to do so is enhanced by the fact of their Indian extraction and it is largely on the strength of this that their publishers are kept happy and the cash registers kept ringing. The fact of the matter is, however, that these authors are culturally displaced persons. They have been westernized to such an extent that they can only recognize their own culture in terms prescribed by the West. Despite Chaudhuri, who insists that he has not uprooted himself from his "native soil", the categories and judgments they use to regard their own society are all of

Western invention. Inevitably, the few writers we have listed above are only the classic exemplars of a way of seeing India that is far more prevalent amongst Indian writers and the new Indian elite in general. Though he has declaimed to place himself among their number, Chaudhuri observes that many Indian writers:

> ...try to see their country and society in the way Englishmen or Americans do and write about India in the jargon of the same masters...Most Indian writers solve this problem (of representing India) not by choosing a genuine Indian subject and creating an adequate western idiom to express it, but by selecting a wholly artificial theme which the Western world takes to be Indian.[46]

A more detailed investigation of the characteristics of this genre will follow in a case-study of Chaudhuri himself, but as a way of preparation it might not be out of place here to touch on a few of the more salient points. In books like the *Continent of Circe, A Portrait of India, Gone Away, An Area of Darkness, India a Wounded Civilization and India a Million Mutinies Now* the complex and diverse reality of Indian past and present is, without the slightest regret, neatly summarized in the span of several hundred pages. Like the practice of "imaginative geography" in which sweeping movements shape up vast areas of the world for the convenient digestion of the intellect, these books reduce an otherwise multifarious reality to a manageable serving with no apparent humility. As the Times Literary Supplement rightly complained of Mehta's book :

To paint a portrait of India is as impossible as to paint one of Europe or Africa.[47]

The title of the same review- "India at Random"- belies the true nature of books of this type as does a review of Chaudhuri's *Continent of Circe* which Khushwant Singh called "One Indian's India".[48] That is to say, that from the whole panoply of Indian life, the author selects those few images which pander to his prejudices. There is therefore a familiar pattern to the characterizations of India that appear in these works. On prominent display are the India of bizarre religious practices, sexual licentiousness and unbelievable filth and poverty.

Due to the fact that for writers like Chaudhuri, Naipaul, Moraes and Mehta, India is often, as it was before for many British and Orientalist authors, a place of "Pilgrimage" presented as a "spectacle".[49] These books enjoy popularity because they are about the fabulous, mysterious India everyone had heard about.

Yes, the negative image of India does not complete the whole picture of India as seen from afar. There was that other more favorable impression which may possibly have had an even more decisive effect in shaping Indian self perceptions. As David Pocock maintains, there were positive and negative views of Indian society and these were represented on "both sides of the cultural ecountrer".[50] Says Benita Parry :

There were those who did approach Indian thought, institutions and conventions as expressions of authentic civilization.[51]

Among the literary exponents of this view could be listed Orwell and E.M. Forster. But of even more importance was the work of a number of sympathetic Orientalist scholars. It was they who rediscovered the achievements of India's past which enabled Indians to see themselves in their own history.

Thus, both what Indians might take pride in and what they were to be ashamed of were both derived from British standards. In both respects, the consciousness of what it meant to be Indian was a British invention. As a result of the cultural encounter, the future for Indians seemed to devolve on the possibilities of two alternative images. For those, like Chaudhuri and Naipaul, who embraced the negative perceptions of India, the future lay in emulating the picture of the West. For those, like R.K. Narayan, who appreciated the achievements of Sanskritic culture as discovered by the Orientalists, the future meant a return to native traditions and a healthy skepticism about most thing Western. As Edward Shils has remarked, "these twin forces in the shape of constitutional liberalism and native revivalism have run almost independently and unaware of each other".[52] The impulses toward modernity and tradition have effectively divided India into

'two worlds'. Only recently has it become evident that the much-discussed synthesis between tradition and modernity may now actually be taking place. This mixture, in which images of the old and new may blend together, is best represented by Ved Mehta, a writer who is creative and comfortable with the intellectual jargon of the West but equally unwilling to disown any part of his Indian heritage.

The intermediary position allows some Indian intellectuals to act as cultural brokers. Depending on the degree of rootedness in their own culture, they may incorporate a greater or lesser number of the details present in the image of modernity into their own conception of India's future. At the same time, they interpret the image of Indian culture to a western audience. In other words, if we take the writing of Chaudhuri or Narayan as an example, we will realize that we are on a two-way street. Despite the fact that they write in English and have a limited audience in their homeland, Chaudhuri and Narayan Present an image of the East of the West which must have a considerable impact in India.

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Chapter: Four

IMAGE OF INDIA IN V.S NAIPAUL'S TRILOGY

4.1. Introduction

4.2. An Area of Darkness

4.3. India: A Wounded Civilization

4.4. India: A Million Mutinies Now

Chapter: Four

IMAGE OF INDIA IN V.S NAIPAUL'S TRILOGY

4.1. Introduction

India is a difficult country to characterize, and Indians not easy to define, particularly today when they both are in transition, emerging from the shadow of their glorified history into the glare of a globalizing world. India is at once too big and too diverse for convenient understanding of all its labels. To every generalization there is a notable exception for every similarity there is a significant difference.

This work is an attempt towards the perceiving V S Naipaul's image of India. The prime consideration is to look at the 'true' India in contrast and comparison with that of V S Naipaul's India, accepting the fact that truth is not universal and could have notable exceptions.

The purpose of this research is to attempt a new and dramatically different inquiry into that of V S Naipaul's India. Such an inquiry is speedily relevant today, not only for India, but also to the outside world.

4.2. *An Area of Darkness*

An Area of Darkness (1964), is Naipaul 's first travelogue on India, as a result of his first visit in 1960. It is a master piece of travel-writing. Dom Moraes tells - "It has come in for much unwarranted criticism in India, but I have always

found it not only a brilliant piece of literature but an interesting psychological study of Naipaul by Naipaul".[1] If one takes it as a literary work and nothing more than that, then the book seems, what Paul Theroux calls "a Master Piece of Travel-writing... wise, original"[2]

It is semi-autobiographical as Naipaul narrates his own experiences, knitting them with the prevailing conditions. Naipaul throws light on the crisis, India, his 'area of darkness' underwent in 1960's. He exposes the dirty politics, ignorance, Muslim fundamentalism and the superstitions of Hindus. He discloses the follies and crimes prevalent at the time of his visit, with a view to make the Indian people realize their limitations and shortcomings.

An Area of Darkness is both bulky and rich qualitatively. The book is divided into three parts, and there is three, four and three chapters in first, second and third parts respectively. Each of the chapters give a variety of pictures about the drawbacks, cruelties, dark and murky aspects and conflicts of 1960's India. The mode of narration, author's use of vocabulary and style are simple, lucid and impressive but sardonic.

Naipaul intends to give the background to his visit to India. In this connection he writes the 'Traveller's Prelude'. Immediately after reading this, what he calls 'A Little Paperwork', one becomes aware of Naipaul's intentions and his negative attitude towards India.

Right in the beginning, Naipaul mentions about the Goan whom he meets immediately after he gets down from the ship, and asks for cheese. From this very juncture Naipaul begins to express his dissatisfaction towards the Indian civilization. He feels that even though Englishmen have taught Indians to prepare cheese for nearly two centuries, they have failed to learn the preparation of cheese. And this becomes the starting point for Naipaul's degradation of India and its people.

Naipaul was under the illusion that East had begun to him in Greek itself by seeing the emphasis given to sweets. But when he sees the people in jubbahs running shabbily all over the ship, and the harassment he underwent in Customs office, makes him feel that it was here in India and not in Greece the East had begun. He says

> Thereafter, feature by feature, the East known only from books, continued to reveal itself ... there was the East one had expected: the children, the dirt, the disease, the under-nourishment, the cries of bakshish, the touts, the glimpses of minarets (A.D.11):

Naipaul expected India to be up to date. The illusion of which was created in his mind by his readings and by the stories of his granny, was entirely different from the India which he comes to see. For him it is merely a difference between the illusion and reality. But he never realises, that what he considers to be reality is only the reality on the surface and not the absolute reality.

At first Naipaul faces the problem with his liquor bottles; it was solved with great difficulty. He blames the Indian administration for his difficulty and never accepts his own fault of inviting the difficulty by violating the law of the land. After overcoming the problem with his liquor bottles, the problem with his very identity begins. He is unhappy not only of the overcrowded pavements and bazaars and beggars of Bombay, but he is unhappy as nobody, he feels, recognises him, for like an Indian, he appeared to them. This mortifies his aggressive and egoistic sentiments. He records thus:

> And for the first time in my life I was one of the crowd. There was nothing in my appearance or dress to distinguish me from the crowd eternally hurrying into Churchgate Station. In Trinidad to be an Indian was to be distinctive. To be anything there was distinctive; difference was each man 's attribute. To be an Indian in England was distinctive; in Egypt it was more so. Now in Bombay I entered a shop or a restaurant and awaited a special quality of response. And there was nothing. It was like being denied part of my reality. Again and again I was caught. I was faceless. I might sink without a trace into that Indian

crowd. I had been made by Trinidad and England; recognition of my difference was necessary to me. I felt the need to impose myself and didn't know how (A.D.43).

Responding to this attitude of Naipaul, C.D.Narasimhaiah, one of the foremost bitter critics of Naipaul, writes: "In England it was 'distinctive to be an Indian', but in India he was not regarded differently from Indians. And his ego was hurt when he didn't get 'a special quality of response' and he feared he might 'sink without a trace into the Indian crowd'. And so he had to fight for self-preservation, well, by looking down upon Indians if necessary. Which means to understand India, one must understand Mr.Naipaul".[3]

Next, Naipaul explains his problems to one of his friend. He was told that nothing was wrong with India or its people, but it was with the books which he (Naipaul) like others has read in a way to prepare himself for the Indian tour. C.D.Narasimhaiah in the conclusion to his essay 'Somewhere something has snapped', on *An Area of Darkness'* aptly advises: "For that anyone interested in India would have to turn to books like Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope* and R.K.Narayan's *Gods, Demons and Others*".[4]

Though Naipaul claims India to be the background of his childhood, he still feels that it was an unreal country, he feels so only because, he was never given the physical whereabouts of this land. He writes:

> .... India had in a special way been the background of my childhood. It was the country from which my grandfather came, a country never physically described and therefore unreal...(A.D.27).

This shows the false imaginations of Naipaul judging things at once right or wrong, real or unreal. Here he severely commits the logical fallacy of mal-observation.

While describing his household in Trinidad, he feels that more than in people India was present in the things which his family possessed. Things like,

string bed, plaited straw mats, brass vessels, printing blocks, etc., have enabled him to imagine about the common household of India before seeing it. All those things were used at his granny 's household owing to custom, and they believed that as the custom was old, they have to follow it. Naipaul, even in this smells the superstitious Hindu-Indian attitude. He symbolically identifies Gold Teeth Nanee with India and says, by the fall of this uninvited eater, 'one India was crashed'.

Although Naipaul feels that Indian people and things provided him the background for his childhood, still he considers India to be an 'area of darkness'. This is evident when he says:

> ... and I thought of the time when the transference was made as a period of darkness, darkness which also extended to the land, ... I have travelled lucidly over that area which was to me the area of darkness, something of the darkness remains, in those attitudes, those ways of thinking and seeing ... (A.D.30).

These opinions of Naipaul seem very much superficial and over optimistic. The reason he gives for calling India *'An Area of Darkness'* is trivial and in this regard P.C.David rightly says: "The darkness of Naipaul is the darkness of his own situation born out of a romantic reverie which cannot stand the glare of the day. He can be likened to somebody who has scooped himself in a dark room with the shades drawn and then tremulously complains about photophobia when he takes one small step outside".[5]

It is only his skeptical and pessimistic attitude that has made him to consider this area of light as *An Area of Darkness*. K.S.Ramamurthi feels like asking Naipaul, what exactly the kind of India that he wanted to see - "It is the sad story of one for whom the emergence from darkness to light, the experience of seeing in broad sunlight what has remained '*An Area of Darkness*' for years brings with it considerable shock and disillusionment. But then one is inclined not to call it a disillusionment at all, for disillusionment should mean finer and more favorable impressions destroyed by contact with reality and as far as Naipaul is

concerned there seems to have been no favorable impressions at all of India at any stage of his life. Though India lay about him during the years of childhood in a hundred things, in the people around him, in family customs, festivals and ceremonies, in dress and food habits, it had made no impression on him which was palpable or favorable. It had always eluded his grasp remained *An Area of Darkness* and one wonders what exactly the kind of India that Naipaul expected to see was".[6]

Writing about the food appetite and the caste system of India and Trinidad-India, he brings in his fictional mind into action and narrates the story of a marriage of a well to do Chammar (cobbler), which was not attended by many. Naipaul, a man who has rejected the tradition, pretends to be bothered about the violation of tradition in India. He writes as if in pain;

> ... how can I explain my feeling of outrage when I heard that in Bombay they used candles and electric bulbs for Diwali festival, and not the rustic clay lamps of immemorial design, which in Trinidad we still used? (A.D.36).

But the basic fact is that, for some extent due to the advancement in science and technology and for some extent the prosperity of the civilization are the causes for people not using the rustic clay lamps in a metropolitan city like Bombay. And for this, there is no necessity of generalization because in thousands of towns and villages, these very rustic clay lamps are being used even now.

To expose his grotesqueness and exaggeration, we can take up his self-built up story of Ramon, the Goan

> He was short, his hair thick and curling at the ends, his features blunt, like his strong stubby fingers. ... Ramon 's lawyer was exultant. Ramon was as serene as before; his fellow conspirators suddenly appeared utterly exhausted.(A.D.36-40)

Naipaul wants us to believe that Ramon was not at all an earthly creature. Naipaul makes him a mere figure of myth. He is described as a man to whom

things difficult or puzzling kept happening. He is made insensitive to any event of his life, he is unmoved even when the law-suit was filed against him for attempting to burn a scooter. Regarding this story of Naipaul, P.C.David feels: "It may undoubtedly appear smart and clever but it would not do for a travelogue. A travelogue writer has to keep a certain distance from the world in order to be objective, but it does not mean that his personages should be so distanced from reality that they lose their foothold and become unconvincing".[7]

After the end of Ramon's story, Naipaul says that as he was not able to attend Ramon's cremation, he was left to imagine the scene, likewise, India, unseen and told about in the stories of his granny for him was thus a 'place of imagination'.

In his picturesque language, writing about Indian poverty, he considers India to be the poorest country in the world, and thus depicts:

> India is the poorest country in the world. Therefore, to see its poverty is to make an observation of no value...(A.D.44).

He feels that in hundreds of stories written in almost all Indian languages, this poverty and beggary is highlighted. Quite commonly we find the stories of girls taking up prostitution either for the sake of feeding their family or for paying its medical bills. But Naipaul never realises that there is a lot of difference between illusion and reality. His statements are not at all applicable to the present Indian situation. That's why P.C.David remarks: "The only prejudice of a travelogue writer should be that he is in favour of reality. When we apply this criterion to Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness*, we feel that he has a prejudice for some personal vision of India, not for the reality of India. He withdraws from the reality with a sense of shock. Too often he tells us that he abstracted himself from the scene, as it was distasteful or comprehensible to him".[8]

Later while telling us the stories of Ramanath, the stenographer, Mr.Malhotra, his employer, Jivan and Vasant, once again bringing in his fictional

mind he wants us to believe his stories and his interpretation of Gita. For him Indians pretend to be traditional, but in the practical side of life they ignore tradition. He is of the opinion that, though Indians worship Gita and act like respecting it, they retreat from its message 'To die in one's duty is life: to live in another's is death'. They care more for their position and pride of their designation and ignore their duty at most.

> The clerk will not bring you a glass of water even if you faint. The architecture student will consider it a degradation to make drawings, to be a mere draughtsman. ... And Ramnath the stenographer ... will refuse to type out what he has taken down in short hand(A. D .47).

By narrating this story he intends to say that Indians are adamant in demanding only their rights and are least bothered about their duties. For him beside all these things India was present. Even he feels that Indians cannot function without pressure. According to Naipaul, to make Indians work, one has to treat them like animals. He expresses this through the words of his fictional character Mr.Malhotra, an Europe returned officer, who says:

> Treat you people like people, and the net result is that you get insubordinate. Treat you like animals, and then you behave... (A.D.51).

By coming across this, one feels that in the whole of this book Naipaul has never tried to look at us as human beings, after coming of India, he behaves as if he has entered the land or world of some domestic animals. So no one would like to sympathise Naipaul, a poor man without an identity as he has continuously attempted to test our patience-the very Indian patience.

After this, narrating the stories of Jivan and Vasant, he tells them as if they are American tales. He gives them an American twist ignoring the Indian situation. Jivan who :

> ...was thirteen or fourteen when he left his village to look for work in Bombay. He has no friends in the city and nowhere to go. He slept on the pavements. At

last he found a job... Earned fifty rupees a month... Jivan rose fast... he had the magic touch .... After sometimes he had saves eight thousand rupees, slightly more than six hundred pounds... He bought a taxi and hired it out... He still worked for his firm (A.D.53).

C.D.Narasimhaiah feels that only to give the story a Naipaulian twist and to make it an authentic dark Indian story;

He still worked for his firm(A.D.53).

Regarding Vasan 't success story :

Vasant grew up in Bombay slum. He was very young when he left school to look for work. He offered a service to stock brokers... He read all the stock broker 's telegrams: his knowledge of the market grew... He became rich... when he was poor he had never eaten during the day the habit remained... (A.D.54)

C.D.Narasimhaiah bitterly reacting to these stories of Naipaul says: "Mr. Naipaul must suffuse this stale success story with exotic Indian Colours, he must as a literary artist ignite the cliché, must, as one who has an exceptional insight into the Indian mind, give an Indian slant, must make an American phenomenon ring true in the Indian context which means the Vasant story must shape differently, darkly different". He adds "Well written", one would say but would add, "Difficult to swallow though".[9]

About the matter of mimicry, Naipual accuses us for copying down almost everything that of English. He satirically says that, right from the beginning, Indian civilization has been imitating its invaders. He opines that :

Yesterday the mimicry was Mogul: " tomorrow it might be Russian or American: today it is English (A.D.56).

One would like to inform Mr. Naipaul that India from ages has believed in the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'. We Indians have believed in the concept of the world as one family. When we desire to teach our culture to the

foreign people, likewise we must be ready to welcome the foreign culture, but in a way that foreign culture may not overtake ours. Naipaul behaves as if the cultural mix up irritates him. India, being a secular nation, would not like to discriminate cultures. What I.K.Masih wants to say about Naipaul 's accusing is; "The mimicry of British which he discovers is an exception and not the rule. The Indian Army officer may look English but it is often mere appearance. He too in spite of his stiff collar and direct link with the Anglo-India of clubs and sahibs has his roots in the poverty and squalor from which the writer shrinks. Similarly if he thinks that churchgoers are only Anglo-Indians following an alien faith in a grotesque manner, he is absolutely wrong. After all Christianity came to India centuries back when the Western world was not even aware of it. This mimicry, as he calls all this, is his fantasy".[10]

Naipaul appreciatingly writes about Manohar Malgoankar 's novel *The Princess*. This story on the part of Naipaul, is like a stick provided to a man who is about to hit his fellow being. The story is about the quarrel between the Prince and his subject named Kanakchand, an untouchable. At first the Prince ill treats Kanakchand, when chance permits Kanakchand revenges. But later the son of the very Prince manages to take revenge against Kanakchand. Instead of sympathising, Naipaul would like to enjoy the quarrel.

In the most parts of this chapter 'The Colonial', Naipaul writes about defecation and dirt, as if he has dedicated this chapter to the Indian squalor. Wherever he goes, whether it is Madras, Bombay, Goa or Srinagar, he sees people defecating openly without shame. Here one of the logical fallacies, post-hop-ergo; propter-hop-ergo is aptly applicable as according to which the mere coincidence of facts are taken into consideration. As for example, star appears and the King dies, and, the crow sits and the branch cuts. Likewise Naipaul sees and people defecate. Naipaul moves on to say;

> Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate, mostly, beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches; they defecate on the hills; they defecate

on the river banks; they defecate on the streets; they never look for cover(A.D.70).

This is an impossible probability in the present Indian context. If we intentionally go on hunting people defecating openly, we could hardly find one or two cases. Whereas Naipaul finds them everywhere abundantly. One suspects whether he is committing the falsity of generalisation. Darshan Singh Maini strongly feels that: "... the thing which made the book ultimately famous was Naipaul's discovery of defecation in India... The energies of art proceed sometimes from mysterious sources! Naipaul's pathological pre-occupation with this problem surely suggests a defecation complex... is the reason for Naipaul's compulsive return to dung, defecation and death".[11]

Naipaul's depiction of a defecation scene at Madras irks Annaiah Gowda and makes him to say; "While in Madras, having lost himself in describing defecation, he has not one word for the lovely beach which faces and gives a majestic background to the buildings on the Marina. Naipaul in his personal reminiscences has chosen to shut his eyes to the India which is not defecating".[12]

Naipaul makes Gandhi, an observer when he says 'The observer is seeing what no Indian sees'. By calling Gandhi an observer Naipaul intends to treat him to be someone having colonial mind, as he has stayed for more than twenty years in South Africa. He misguides us by saying that only Gandhi was capable of writing sober things about India, in an outsider's view point, only because he had a colonial mind. He feels that if Gandhi was not an outsider or a colonial then it would have been impossible for him to write so aggressively. At this juncture he quotes Gandhi extensively.

By our bad habits we spoil our sacred river banks and furnish excellent breeding grounds for flies. ... A small spade is the means of salvation from a great nuisance. Leaving night-soil, cleaning the nose, or spitting on the road is a sin against God as well as humanity, and betrays a sad want of consideration for

> others. The man who does not cover his waste deserves a heavy penalty even if he lives in a forest(A.D.7).

Gandhi neither had the colonial eye or an outsider's view point, but he just wrote with the intention of teaching some good and even he wrote optimistically. Whereas Naipaul a mere pessimist misuses the writings of Gandhi only to mock at the Indian condition. Moving one step forward Naipaul dares to say:

> He (Gandhi) remains a tragic paradox. ... Nothing remains of Gandhi in India. ... But in India he has already receded; he might have lived in the days when scribes wrote on leaves and strips of brass and people travelled on foot(A.D.81-82).

It can be considered to be the ill fate of Naipaul for having failed to meet even a single orthodox Gandhian when he has managed to meet many of the orthodox Hindus and Muslims. Hundreds of Gandhians even today are able to lead their life not only successfully but also a spiritually luxurious life, only by adopting Gandhian principles. One feels pity for Naipaul, for not having met even a single Gandhian among the several of people he had encountered in hundreds of places he had visited. Naipaul must be aware that before he tries to understand Gandhi and Gandhism, he must at first should try to understand a Gandhian, a man who leads his life on the principles and thoughts of Gandhi. If Naipaul thinks that Gandhi 's writings and principles were outdated, it is his mere ignorance and nothing more than that. He utterly fails to look up at the advancement of India towards prosperity. The secret of Indian success is Gandhism. Naipaul is unaware of the fact that it his principles that have won Gandhi thousands of hearts not only in England but also in other countries. It is these very principles which have enabled India to win its freedom. It is only because of the fact that 'the greatness of this man is his simplicity', which has made many Englishmen to worship him even today as they revere Florence Nightingale and others.

Under the heading 'Romancers', Naipaul once again writes his mimicry story. He highlights the Indian attitude of ailing for the foreign made goods and modernism. He tells us the story of Mrs.Mahindra, again his exaggerating fictional mind plays a predominant role. Here, he wants Mrs.Mahindra to represent India. Mrs.Mahindra wishes to be foreign from tip to toe. She would like to have foreign made curtains and wants the walls to be painted according to the foreign taste. But on the contrary, her husband and father-in-law disliked her taste. Her husband even objects her for keeping paying guests. The story gets a Naipaulian twist when he makes his heroine desirable of getting her son married to a foreign girl. For this P.C.David remarks: "It is the angularity of his distorted vision which makes him see a craze for 'foreign' in Mrs.Mahindra. With a single trait exaggerated, he can with a churlish delight play upon the comical in her character. We are surprised that in a land famous for its hospitality, Naipaul could get only Mrs.Mahindra as his hostess! "[13] One feels that Naipaul who sees the craze for foreign things in Mrs.Mahindra, on the other hand he fails to see at her Indian heart which makes him feel homely.

At Rajghat, Naipaul refuses to go barefooted to look around. It is his mere arrogance which makes him to do so. But he doesn't miss trivial things. He catches the scene of school boys taking money from some foreign tourists. For him it was an official way of begging.

> Blue-shirted school boys waited for the Americans. ... The ladies, informed of India 's poverty, stopped, opened their purses and smilingly distributed coins and notes... (A.D.92).

Naipaul doesn 't even have the simple psychology of understanding that the coins and notes were not given to the children as something that is given to the beggars, but it was only as a token of love and affection, from the ladies far away from their land and far away from their own children.

In Jammu, he encounters one more romancer who he feels asks him, the same old ordinary questions which every Indian knowing even little English as

the foreign visitors.

> And where do you come from? ... And what do you think of our great country? (A.D.94)

But one feels that it is not all worth mentioning. We find these questions with people all over the globe. People ask them out of their curiosity, to the visitors, not only in India but also in many other countries.

Naipaul rented a room at Hotel Liward on the Dal Lake. At first he encounters Mr.Butt, the proprietor, and then was taken charge of by Aziz, a servant in the hotel. He writes about his unique experience in the hotel, he considers the hotel to be a Doll 's House as everything in it changed dramatically within a short span of time. The whole setting of the room allotted to him including its wall paintings were changed on the day before his arrival. In the hotel the servants continuously beg him for tips. But once when he refuses the cook 'Khansamah ' of any more tips, the cook decides to give up his job.

> So the vision of the hotel as doll 's houses altered (A.D.117)

About Aziz, Naipaul finds him to be praiseworthy. Aziz helped him in all respects and was ready to help him with anything he wanted. Naipaul was not Aziz 's employer; even then Aziz did his best to satisfy him. At least now one will be satisfied to know that at last Naipaul has found an Indian fit to be praised, and who is dedicated to his work wholly. Naipaul himself discloses this when he says :

> ...Aziz 's work was his life. ... Service was his world. It was his craft, his trade; ... and it was the source of his power(A.D.114).

By seeing Aziz he must have realised that Indians are not only hard workers but also they worship their work. And his statement made earlier at the time of his journey from Delhi, suffers from the falsity of generalisation.

> Labour is degradation; only a foreigner would see otherwise (A.D.72).

Writing about the primitive and mediocre city of Shrinagar. Naipaul - the writer, triumphs over Naipaul the pilgrim. His language reaches its zenith in this chapter, 'The Medieval City'. We find lucidity and clarity in his phrases. But very soon, as if he comes back to the matters of his original interest, he writes about the people who misinterpret the very history of Kashmir. One fine young man calls the shrine built by Akbar, a five thousand year old building wherein it was actually a sixteenth century ruin. Naipaul mocks at a boy who tells him about the fort built by Pandavas, the heroes of Mahabaratha, one of the two great epics of India. Obeying his habit of telling half-truths, he writes;

> 'Too much of whisky'. ... This was a proof of his talent. In India poets and musicians are required to live the part: it is necessary to be sad and alcoholic (A.D.132-133).

One wonders how he has managed to meet only the wrong people always. He has made himself possible to meet, one who misinterpreted history, one who thinks Sheik Abdullah great as he had suggested his subjects to eat potatoes when they were starving without food, one saying 'best' for something which was very good and one wanting to be sad for being a poet.

Naipaul satirically writes about red-tapism:

> It is estimated that in Kashmir, as in the rest of India, one-third of development funds drains away in corruption and the exchanging of gifts. ... The system was necessary and in India it was the only system that could work. ... The contractor was charged a fixed percentage of his extra profits, and this was divided, again in fixed percentages, among the employees of the department concerned. ... 'Through proper channel'. ... That a civil servant who objected to corruption had been transferred or dismissed for corruption (A.D.I35-136).

It is an open secret that this red-tapism was inherited from the English. British have sown deep this disease of red-tapism into the land of India. This was a part and parcel of their divide-and-rule policy. Every colony which was ruled by English has inherited this. Likewise, India has inherited its share and

even more than its share. British at every juncture of their conquest in India taught Indians this art of 'bribe'. Speaking briefly we can say that this red-tapism is one of the serious contagious diseases that Britishers have left behind in India.

Naipaul mocks at the orthodoxy of both the Hindus and the Muslims. He feels humiliated to see the punishments which Muslims undertook at the time of Muharram. He was fed-up with the pretense of the Hindus who acted to be clean by their unclean activities. In order to get rid of the very sight of the Hindu pilgrims, he takes up a trip to Gulmarg, where he was carried away by excitements. More exited he was to see the behaviour of Aziz at the time of their visit. He depicts about some scenes which impressed him. In an interview with Dom Moraes, speaking about Kashmir he says:

"The people are charming, some of the landscape's beautiful, Kashmir in particular. ... I wrote my novel, *Mr. Stone And The Knights Companion* in Kashmir. I'd like to revisit it".[14]

In the chapter 'Pilgrimage', he writes about his own pilgrimage to Amarnath. But he tells very less about his own experience and writes widely about the running away of the 'ghora-wallah' (white man) and the problems he faced due to that, and about the untidy Sadhus whom he encounters on his way. The thing which receives more importance is his encountering Laraine, an American girl. Laraine having strong faith in the Hindu culture, still manages to marry an Indian Muslim Sitar artist, Rafiq. By the end of this chapter he takes leave from Hotel Liward. The scene of his own departure had made a deep impact on his mind as Aziz and others filled their eyes with tears while seeing him off.

Naipaul, rightly called by some critics, 'the best living writer in English', writing about the Indian fantasy and ruins, exhibits his mastery over the English language. Even he shows his grip over the art of merging fiction and non-fiction

together. But here what is regrettable is that he again and again obeys his habit of telling half-truths and showers them on us in abundance. He is least bothered even if his act hurts millions of sensitive hearts. He behaves like a sadist who always enjoys complaining.

Naipaul holds the opinion that there is a lot of difference between the England that existed in Trinidad and the England that is present in India. He says that:

> The England of India was totally different. It remained an incongruous imposition (A.D.189).

The English culture was a forceful imposition which contributed to India 's disharmony. Indians have managed to absorb the culture and languages of all their invaders except British. Still English language has not gained its position in the literary arena of India.

He widely discusses Kipling and E.M.Foster, their characters created out of their fantasy. By this he intends to relate Indian reality with their fantasies. Darshan Singh Maini making clear the intentions of Naipaul says: "... Naipaul acknowledges at the outset, all that needs to be said about the Indian poverty and misery and waste has been said in song and story and travelogue from Kipling and Beverley Nicholas and other scribes of the same Kidney. And yet he must sing his piece, for these things hit your solar plexus with a shattering force, as though you had 'discovered' them. He cannot resist the temptation to make a mystique of India 's poverty in the prescribed manner".[15]

C.D.Narasimhaiah considering seriously, one of the Naipaul 's deliberately made statements;

> A Journey to India was not really necessary (A.D.191).

he says - "... but just as well, Mr.Naipaul must have thought, since it had been made possible by a generous foundation. Why did he have to come? And

having decided to come, what did he bring with him? ... briefly it is negation, disgust, horror of the unclean. It starts in Greece ... increases as he travels through the Middle East and reaches its breaking point in India".[16]

While writing about the Indian history and its interpretation by the Indians, Naipaul ridiculously says:

> Indian interpretations of their history are almost as painful as the history itself; ... India is above all the land of ruins (A.D.202).

In one sense Naipaul is correct in saying, our history is painful. Yes, really we were harmed at large by the external invasions. Apart from this our history also consists in it the account of the suppression and the harassment by the English, thus our history is painful. Regarding our interpretation of our history, it is his mere commitment which makes him to write so. India has been ruined partly by the Muslim invaders and partly by the British, and so at present it remains the land of ruins. The nation is still advancing towards prosperity and it will take some more time for that. Moreover it is facing its own problems because of its uneven climatic conditions. One likes Naipaul to remember the fact that 'Rome was not built in a day'.

When he comes to Hampi, the capital city of Vijayanagar, ignoring to see the venerable glory of the ruins, he goes to see a child squatting and pale dog eating the excrement. This makes one to suspect about his very virtues and his life principles. I.K.Masih reacting to this attitude of Naipaul says: "... all that Naipaul could see was the child defecating and the mangy dog eating it. The passion which he misses is not physical. He claims that Indians live on the memory of the past, the ruins. But only those who have a past worth remembering can live on it".[17]

Naipaul exhibits his mere ignorance once more when he compares the Indian urge for architecture to the trivial thing like the act of sex.

> Building is like an elemental urge, like the act of sex among the starved. It is building for the sake of building, creation for the sake of creation (A.D.205).

No, Naipaul doesn't have the slightest concern or minimal amount of love and respect towards art. He must not have compared it with such a trivial thing. If he didn't like them, he must have kept quite without commenting on them, as they in no way bothered him. C.D.Narasimhaiah provides an answer to Naipaul's remarks when he says: "... the anonymous builders of Indian temples on the precipitous edge of snowy peaks, in the hearts of impenetrable jungles, and on the islands of stormy seas, building was not for the sake of building but the deepest and profoundest act of self-realization, of self-fulfillment-not of advertisement of the ego or the wounded ego as in the present volume, certainly not like the routine act of sex in a starved man' - in the process of annihilating the self in the service of the Lord".[18] Naipaul still moving one step forward says:

> The Taj Mahal is exquisite. Transported slab by slab to the United States and re-erected, it might be wholly admirable. But in India it is a building wastefully without a function... (A.D.206).

By reading such passages, one will simply say that it is Naipaul's wounded psyche which makes him to write and think so arrogantly. After thinking of shifting Taj Mahal slab by slab, he would not mind to grab away our history from us. One must be thankful to Naipaul for not having got the thought of shifting the river flowing beside the Taj Mahal, and for not saying that the very river is flowing wastefully in India.

Naipaul while writing about the scene of the Gita, dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna at Kurukshetra, which he sees its sculpture in one of the temples, he cheaply writes:

> It is less than bazaar art. The chariot will never move; the horses are dead, stiff, heavy(A.D.207).

Here Naipaul 's materialistic approach in judging things is clearly visible. He fails to enter into the deep layers of the harsh reality.

One of the absurd statements of Naipaul,

"Somewhere something has snapped"(A.D.207).

makes C.D.Narasimhaiah to say: "Mr.Naipaul does not tell us what has snapped, where it has snapped, much less, why it has snapped. Students of Indian history know that creativity dried up long ago, we became repetitive and imitative and we lost the social sense with increasing gap between the individual and society. But that is all part of the nation's history, quite beyond his grasp, and here in this book it is the tragedy of an extraordinarily gifted, proud, sensitive individual for whom something has snapped inside and whose book, therefore, if it makes the reader sad, has left the writer sadder, but not wiser. For it is the agonizing experience of a homeless, rootless man without country, without religion, without a set of beliefs and values to live by. For when after this self-laceration in India he goes back to England emptiness stares him in the face and emptiness ends in despair it is 'too deep for formulation".[19]

When he makes one more absurd statement,

"Shiva has ceased to dance"(A.D.217).

I.K.Masih eagerly and even sharply answers: "Shiva 's dance of life and death appear to him futile and erotic sculptures represent mere painful sex. He misses the reality, the inner meaning of the beginning and end meeting at a point. ... He is too caste-conscious and egoistic to appreciate and understand the rhythm of Shiva 's cosmic dance and Krishna 's eternal sermon. No, Shiva has not ceased to dance. India leaves on the beats of Shiva 's cosmic dance".[20]

Naipaul knits a story with fact ,that of a Sikh who hates the Dravidians or South Indians. This is true to an extent, an improbable possibility even in the present Indian atmosphere. Naipaul very bitterly condemns this act of racial

discrimination. The discrimination between the Aryans and the Dravidians is vanishing gradually in India. But the 'worshippers' doesn't understand, it is after all Naipaul's concern and fear about discrimination that exists long after the independence.

On some other occasion Naipaul is attracted towards the Sikhs and at the same time he dislikes South Indians. This is visible when he makes the Sikh to hit a man mistaking him to be a Dravidian, this is definitely his double standard,

> The Sikhs puzzled and attracted me. They were among the few whole men in India, and of all Indians they seemed closest in many ways to the Indians of Trinidad. ... 'Slap'. ... 'These bloody Dravidians are staring at me' (A.D.222-231).

Moving a step ahead Naipaul criticises the eating style of the South Indians. He ridicules us for eating with hands and not from spoons. But the fact is that no South Indian food can be eaten with spoons. There is nothing un-official in it and our food. Appetite necessitates us to eat with hands. After all one can't eat roti and dosa with spoons. C.D.Narasimhaiah, he being a South Indian crisply answers: "... different too from the impenetrable chunks of unfatted cow, poor prey to the three-cornered attack of matching weapons kept in continuous shine by the tired waitress-thanks to the interaction between gentle exhaling and the multi-purpose apron".[21]

Naipaul writes about the Indo-China war of 1962, he intends to show us the drawbacks and the failure of our Indian Military. He holds responsible the out-dated arms and ammunitions for India's set hack. He is of the opinion that Indians are experts in their speeches and they never think of executing the very things assured in their own speeches. Naipaul grows extravagant when he says;

> Producing too much life, it denied the value of life; yet it permitted a unique human development to so many. Nowhere were people so heightened. rounded and individualistic; nowhere did they otter themselves to fully and with such assurance. To know Indians was to take a delight in people as people; every

encounter was an adventure. I did not want India to sink; the mere thought was painful (A.D.243).

Arun Joshi agrees with this comment of Naipaul, through his book *Appererntice* written on the consequences of the Indo-China war.

But , C.D.Narasimhaiah disagrees with Naipaul when he says, '... Naipaul could not have meant it; he couldn't care less whether India sunk or stood. Not having cared for the land of his own birth and his people - he admits it was a mistake to have been born there, that he always wished to forget it. Trinidad was for him a 'destitute society', 'without history, without achievement' - it is unlikely he cared for India".[22]

Naipaul behaves absurdly when he comes to the village of his grandfather. He refuses to have food and even water, because as he himself says :

Now it reminded me of the Commissioner's advice: 'once it's cooked, you can risk it. But never touch the water? He, however, was of the country. So: no food, I said (A.D.256-257).

Here once again Naipaul interprets things, he mistakes the Commissioner's advice. The Commissioner must have advised him not to take food or water in public places only to prevent himself from Cholera. But, after all this was his home. Ramchandra Dube, the caretaker of Naipaul's ancestral property surrenders all his love and respect, and even to this, Naipaul examines his respect suspiciously.

Naipaul utterly fails to find his roots in the village of his ancestors. His roots were always there, and there was nothing wrong with them, the only thing was that Naipaul never gets hold of them owing to his own confusion. As Dom Moraes comments - "He reacts with the nervousness and disgust common to many fastidious minds on their initial exposure to the subcontinent, heightened in his case by his apparent refusal or inability to acknowledge roots anywhere except in literature, and possibly an underlying feeling that he should, or was

expected to, - acknowledge roots in a place whose immensity and poverty appalled him and, curiously annoyed him".[23]

In his last chapter 'Flight', he writes about his departure from India. Here also, Naipaul, as if he is not satisfied by writing about the dirt and squalor, once again complains about the latrine rooms at the airport. Regarding the plane delay, it is an exceptional case, it is a mere coincidence, it happens only with the people like Naipaul.

To conclude one can say, nevertheless, to Naipaul, India means a land of myths. The land is sacred. Story within a story, fable within a fable are intricately well-knit. There are myths and stories about gods, and fables about the antiquity. The eccentric things about the land perplex him. As a result, he says, to him India appears a nation 'unreal', 'physically undefined' and a country out in the void beyond the dot of Trinidad. What he exactly comes to know in his two years stay in India is that India is an 'area of darkness' resulted due to foreign rule and its own inability to come out of its limitations. No doubt, his assertion is that India, has been wounded by the foreign, racial and religious oppression and exploitation. Thus, it is a wounded civilization. This will be seen in the next part of this chapter, *'India: A Wounded Civilization'*.

4.3. INDIA : A WOUNDED CIVILIZATION

'India : A Wounded Civilization (1979) is the second sequential travelogue of Naipaul on India. Naipaul comes to India for the second time in August 1975 and stays on upto October 1976, and *'India : A Wounded Civilization* is a result of his these two years stay in India. He records the account of the prevalent social, economic and political conditions and the behaviour of the Indian people at the time of his visit. It is once again semi-autobiographical in nature as he gives us the details of his ancestors and depicts about his own experience of visiting several places and meeting people either by chance or by choice. Though this is a more serious than the earlier attempt of Naipaul to

search his roots, even now his negative attitude towards India dominates the whole of this book, *'India : A Wounded Civilization.*

C.D.Narasimhaiah writes; "If I may permit myself a little levity. Naipaul 's writing is the sophisticated equivalent of the cumulative image of bull-fighting, bear-batting and gladiatorial contests with which European society entertained its steak-fed, sensation-seeking spectators. The medium has changed; the message remains. And Naipaul has undertaken the civilizing task of laying bare the defecations, the smells, the darkness, the festering wounds and the misplaced beliefs of backward societies as if to invite the attentions of the white men to resume the burden he has shed.[24]

The book *'India : A Wounded Civilization* is handy and it is divided into three parts, namely. 'A Wounded Civilization'. 'A New Claim on the Land' and 'Not Ideas, but Obsessions'. There are two chapters in each of the first two parts and four chapters in the third part.

In the very first lines of his foreword to the book Naipaul writes about the extreme climatic conditions. He opines by seeing the fellow visitors at the air port that India is again at the periphery of Gulf or Arabian world as it had been in the 8th century. He even feels that India has shrunk since the Arab incursion. But in reality India has neither shrunk nor it is in the verge of shrinking, it has continuously sailed and sailed ignoring all the obstacles and it will in future continues to sail. He gives stress to the point of the advent of the foreigners and the Indian failure to answer those conquests.

> No civilization was so little equipped to cope with the outside world; no country was so easily raided and plundered, and learned so little from its disasters. (IWC-7)

Further, he exposes his intentions to lay emphasis on the facts responsible for the present Indian situation and their consequences. He, in his precise and artistic language gives the description of the men and sights he at first sees

immediately after landing in India (Bombay). He gives us the description of a Muslim whose surname being Qureshi had entered the Indian Administrative Services. This seems unique to Naipaul, but Indian readers feel that it is unnecessary to mention and Naipaul foolishly has made it worth mentioning.

At the very outset, as if frankly, he writes that;

> India is for me a difficult country. It isn't my home and cannot be my home; and yet I cannot reject it or be indifferent to it; I cannot travel only for the sights. I am at once too close and too far. (IWC-8)

Naipaul's confusion is exposed here in his own words. He is in dilemma and is not able to decide anything certainly and whether to consider India to be his home or not. But C.D.Narasimhaiah remarks; "Presumably, on re-reading his own type script before publication he may have told himself that in the interest of artistic truth he would do well to throw in a complimentary remark here and there, as for example, 'India is not my country. And yet I can't be indifferent'. The reluctance to be indifferent is dictated not by sentimental or altruistic considerations but wholly by unashamed opportunism - without ... Areas of Darkness, Wounded Civilization ... Mr.Naipaul's occupation is gone. What, if not this, are the overwhelming compulsions behind his writing? Most assuredly, not to apply the healing touch to the ills of contemporary society, a writers responsibility to his fellowmen - the entire corpus of Naipaul's work gives the lie to it".[25]

What makes one feel itching is his feeling that;

> A hundred years had been enough to wash me clean of many Indian religious attitudes; and without these attitudes the distress of India was - and is - almost insupportable. (IWC-9)

One feels that Naipaul has failed to recognise the sacredness and the virtues of the Indian religion and thus he has considered Indian religion to be trivial. C.D.Narasimhaiah reacting to this attitude of Naipaul says; "I had not thought

that religion was such a filthy thing that he could dismiss it with relief while what he really needs to do is to expiate a pettiness. He is not in need of reminding that washing will not clean memories anymore than it did poor Lady Macbeth. Was he unaware of the irony of such a remark what with its unmistakably Shakespearean overtones the images of 'wash' and 'clean' convey? "[26] Naipaul, being a stranger in India, calls the customs and traditions of India as strange and says that these things have raised many difficulties to him. It was very hard for him to get rid of these things even after his return to England. Here he refers to his first visit to India. Yet he agrees that the things were changing rapidly.

While writing about the Emergency declared by Mrs.Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India, he states that his book is not only -

> An inquiry about India - even an inquiry about the Emergency -has quickly to go beyond the political. It has to be an inquiry about Indian attitudes; it has to be an inquiry about the civilization itself, as it is.(IWC-9)

This may be considered to be the objective of the book. He ironically speaks about the Aryan system of sacrifice and mentions about the rituals followed in his own household, though it had been already a century since their migration. In the concluding lines to his foreword he asserts that though he is a stranger in India, still the Indian memories are like trapdoors into his bottomless past. Here one can smell his sense of relating the present to his past as a means to his quest for the identity of his own.

At the very outset of his chapter 'An Old Equilibrium' Naipaul brings in his fictional mind into action and narrates us the story of the construction of a temple which according to him was built only because of the mere coincidence of facts. As Naipaul says, some British soldiers destroyed this temple and within a few days the whole British Government was forced to quit India, and for this a new temple was built and a statue was erected. Naipaul tells us this story owing to his habit of telling half-truth.

He ironically gives us the details of the rituals and customs and traditions prevalent at the time of Vijayanagar Empire which took its birth for the protection and prosperity of Hinduism. He deals with the matters like slave markets, temples, prostitutes, sati system and the art and architecture. He not only gives the reasons for the downfall of this great Empire but also the reasons for the downfall of the people responsible for the downfall of this great Hindu Empire. He gives us a brief description of the present conditions at Hampi and Hospet. Naipaul lays stress on the very important aspect related to external invasions. Though it is hard to believe, yet it is the stark reality. The people of Vijayanagar, even today, have failed to regain their mental ability because of the impact of those wars. Even today the people of this region have not recovered completely and the tragedy is that this region is far behind comparatively in producing intellectuals for which it was once known. Though for some extent it had overcome the external influence it has failed utterly to get rid of the internal clashes and disasters. But one would not agree with Naipaul 's exaggeration when he says;

> The Hinduism Vijayanagar proclaimed had already reached a dead end, and in some ways had decayed, as popular Hinduism so easily decays, into barbarism. ... It needs technicians, artisans; it needs men with simple skills; it needs even hotel waiters. (1WC 16-17)

These are all half-truths, one would say, Naipaul never takes interest in getting into the inner reality. His opinions are based on the opinions of the people whom he meets either by chance or by choice and on the books which were available to him at air ports. Everyone in this land knows well, the Hinduism which was proclaimed by the Vijayanagar still lives and it has not decayed. The Hindus, the foremost peace lovers in the world, have never become barbarians. It is their mildness and not barbarism which has made them to tolerate such crushing external invasions. Regarding the mental ability, one would like to inform Mr.Naipaul that today this very region is one of the largest industrial areas in India.

Coming down to R.K.Narayan and his novels, Naipaul says that R.K.Narayan is the foremost English novelist in India. But Naipaul accuses Narayan for not writing about the politics in India and for writing only about the religiousness in Indian society. But it is not true; Naipaul has missed the real gesture of Narayan 's works. He commits the fallacy of mal-observation. Though Narayan has made a small South Indian town as the background of his novels, he has succeeded in reflecting the society and the people of India as a whole. What happens to the characters in his novels happens to many of the Indians. Every writer has the motive of reflecting some specific things or subject, what if Narayan choose to write only on the Indian social conditions and not on the political. Naipaul acutely depicts:

> But Narayan 's novels did not prepare me for the distress of India. ... The small town he had staked out as his fictional territory was, I knew, a creation of art and therefore to some extent artificial, a simplification of reality. But the reality was cruel and overwhelming. In the books his India had seemed accessible; in India it remained hidden. ... but I felt that his comedy and irony were not quite what they had appeared to be, were part of a Hindu response to the world, a response I could no longer share. (IWC 21)

C.D.Narasimhaiah bitterly reacting to these words of Naipaul says; "His grievance against R.K.Narayan is the lack of what he calls 'social inquiry' in his novels - a novel by definition is a social inquiry for him. Even so, readers of Narayan and the Indian novel in English should know that if Naipaul had said this against Raja Rao there might well be a semblance of truth because of Raja Rao 's overwhelming metaphysical pre-occupations. But to say that of Narayan, who does nothing but work in a social nexus in novel after novel which for me is Narayan 's relative limitation, is a gross distortion of the truth ".[27]

Next, Naipaul widely discusses R.K.Narayan 's novel Mr. Sampath and specifically one of its characters Srinivas. In the novel Srinivas is portrayed as a parasite who continuously expected help from his brother. Srinivas is such a

typical man that he misinterpreted Gandhi 's concept of non-violence. Naipaul writes:

> But this non-violence or non doing depends on society going on; it depends on the doing of the others. ... Just twenty years have past between Gandhi 's first call for civil disobedience and the events of the novel. But already, in Srinivas, Gandhian non-violence has degenerated into something very like the opposite of what Gandhi intended. For Srinivas non-violence isn 't a form of action, a quickener of social conscience. It is only a means of securing an undisturbed calm: it is non doing, non interference, social indifference. (IWC 23-25)

Of course, there is some reality in these statements of Naipaul. We, Indians, have really failed to execute the principles of Gandhi in the manner he wanted us to do. But it is the failure of the few of our Indians and for this there is no necessity of generalizations as Naipaul does. It is not as severe as Naipaul feels, many Indians even today are strictly following Gandhism, Srinivas is an exceptional case. But we along with Naipaul must be ready to accept the fact that in a country, among different people we naturally find differences of opinions.

While commenting on the progress of India since independence, Naipaul feels that still India has to go a long way. Inspite of the steps and schemes of the Indian Government still many Indian villages are placed below the poverty line. When Naipaul comes to a village in Bihar, which he considers to be the heart-land of Indian culture he sees;

> ... only one family out of four had land; only one child out of four went to school; only one man out of four had work. For a wage calculated to keep him only in food for the day he worked, the employed man, hardly exercising a skill, using the simplest tools and some times no tools at all, did the simplest agricultural labour. Child 's work; and children being cheaper than men, were preferred ... (IWC 28)

One can 't agree completely with Naipaul, the fact that one among the four having land is true. But what he tells about the men using tools is an half-truth.

This is not at all true with present India. India has made itself possible to come out from the using of the traditional tools. The advancement in science and technology which Naipaul ignores to see has enabled India to faster its progress. Regarding the child labour, yes India still has to overcome this social evil.

While in Rajasthan, Naipaul gives us the description of a model village, Bundi. His keen observation and perception which is exhibited here is praiseworthy. He takes into account every minute thing. He interprets the names of these villages and associates them to the names of the art of painting. He deals with almost all aspects of life in these villages, the lands, irrigation systems , crops, cattle, houses, sanitary system and the wars which these people had fought. Naipaul encounters a prince who has lost his Kingdom at the time of Mrs.Gandhi 's rule. But still this Prince considers himself to be the prince of his province and behaved in a princely manner. Naipaul while writing about the Indian patriotism and only to mock at it quotes the dialogue of this very Prince:

> What keeps a country together? No economics, Love. Love and affection. That 's our Indian way. ... You can feed my dog, but he won 't obey you. He 'll obey me. Where 's the economics in that? That 's love and affection. ... For twenty - eight years until 1947 I ruled this state. Power of life and death. (IWC 34)

Satisfactory thing is that at least now, Naipaul is confirmed that it is neither politics nor economics which has brought Indians together, and instead it is only the love and patriotism, which had bound them to be united. Further Naipaul 's own confusion, nervousness, disgust and failure in his approach of confronting the land of his ancestors even at the time of his second visit makes him to say;

> The world outside India was to be judged by its own standards. India was not to be judged. India was only to be experienced, in the Indian way. (IWC 35)

It is his apparent refusal and inability to judge has made him to say so. Every country has its own standards owing to its culture and civilization and

there is no necessity of comparison. While telling us about a girl whom he meets at a dinner party in Delhi, he says that she had married a foreigner and for an Indian woman a foreign marriage is seldom a positive act. And again owing to his own confusion he considers this foreign marriage as an act of despair. For Naipaul it is a big issue, but in India this act of marrying foreigners has come a long way, right from the time of the Kings and Queens.

Naipaul, once again begins his chapter "The Shattering World' by writing about R.K.Narayan and his area of writing. Though Naipaul considers him to be the foremost Indian English novelist, still he feels that Narayan highlighted the Hindu way.

He extensively discusses one of the Narayan 's novel *The Vendor of Sweet,* Jagan, the hero of this novel is a staunch follower of Gandhism. He follows Gandhian principles word by word and thus refuses to pay the sales tax owing to the fact that Gandhi had never spoken about this tax. Narayan 's satire is aimed not at Gandhi or his principles, but at Jagan 's extravagancy. But Naipaul misunderstands and misinterprets this to satirize Gandhi and his principles. Later in the novel Jagan 's son brings home with him a Korean girl from America. They both have come to India with an intention of starting a factory in India. They don 't get any assistance from Jagan. They lived together even though they were unmarried. When Jagan comes to know about this, his feelings were hurt. But he never complained about the Korean girl, he held his son responsible for all that what happened. Jagan was a mild and kind man. Later when his son was imprisoned, he appoints a lawyer to fight out the law suit and even assures the help to the Korean girl by saying that he would provide her with all the expenses if she wished to return to her country. Naipaul ignoring all these deeds and virtues of Jagan and only to mock at him writes:

> Jagan seeks only to maintain the stability of his world; he is capable of nothing else. To be pure in the midst of 'the grim of this earth', secure in the midst of distress; that in all he asks. When his world shatters, he cannot fight back; he

has nothing to offer. He can only run away. Another Hindu retreat - like the Vijayanagar. Jagan 's is the ultimate Hindu retreat because it is a retreat from a world that is known to have broken down at last. It is a retreat, literally, to a wilderness where, 'the edge of reality itself was beginning to blur ': not a return to a purer Aryan past, as Jagan might Jagan might imagine, but a retreat from civilization and creativity, from rebirth and growth, to magic and incantation ... It is the death of a civilization, the final corruption of Hinduism. (IWC 43)

Naipaul 's failure to see the ultimate virtues of Jagan makes C.D. Narasimhaiah to say: "What Naipaul refuses to register in this moving novel is that the sweet vendor, an orthodox Hindu father, nevertheless tries to persuade his wayward son to solemnise his union with the Korean girl he has picked up in America - a girl outside the old man 's caste, class, race, country and culture and brought home, besides, without the father 's approval in the traditional way. The old man makes this gesture simply because of his compassion for a human being in distress of which the son was the cause. It is the modernist son with his new - fangled ideas about making money and achieving fame that disturbs the father deeply but he does not shy away from his parental and social obligations - he arranges legal defence for his arrested son and sends word to the Korean girl that she could always turn to him for airfare when she decided to get back to her country. Jagan 's behaviour is in keeping with the immemorial practice of Indian sages one of whom - Valmiki in the Ramayana - gave shelter to a pregnant woman abandoned by her royal husband; another - Kanva in Kalidasa 's play Shakutuala - agreed to be foster father of an unclaimed child, the offspring of an illicit union".[28]

Naipaul in the next part of this chapter, critically writes about the Emergency imposed by Mrs.Gandhi. Almost all the national leaders were accused of one or the other crime, and were imprisoned. Mrs.Gandhi defended her decision by saying that the Emergency was implemented in a way to bring in the radical reforms in the country. But she didn 't had any such intentions, instead as Naipaul says:

> But it was only terror, and it came confused with a political crisis everyone knew about. It established no new moral frame for the society; it held out no promise for a better - regulated future - it re-enforced, if anything, the always desperate Hindu sense of the self, the sense of encircling external threat, the need to hide and hoard. In the high Hindu ideal of self - realisation - which could take so many forms, even that of worldly corruption - there was no idea of a contract between man and man. (IWC 45)

The only mistake Naipaul commits here is that he relates this Emergency to the Hindu ideal of self-realisation. This ideal of self-realisation can be found in almost all the religions of the world and even in Christianity. Though religion is one of the source of the politics, the ideal of self-realisation, in no way makes its presence in these types of acts like, the Emergency and others. So one would say, here Naipaul has severely committed the falsity of overseeing things.

Naipaul criticises the attitude of Mrs.Gandhi in making poverty a political issue. He satirically writes about her slogan for that times election Garibi Hatao, in return to her slogan and as an answer to her challenge, the opposition party leaders brought in the slogan Indira Hatao.

To expose the 'new morality' of post-Gandhian India, he descriptively writes about the Marathi playwright Vijay Tendulkar and his plays. Naipaul opines that Tendulkar is more violent than Narayan and his India is crueler and recognizable. He brings through his characters his own rebellious attitudes. Naipaul calls him a romantic as he had the urge for change and for him there is no pure past and religion can provide no retreat. His characters seem like strangers or outsiders. Naipaul compares Narayan with Tendulkar and writes:

> Tendulkar 's India is clearly the same country as Narayan 's. But it is a country to which change has come. The world has opened out, and men have become more various and individualistic, the will rages. Sensibility has been modified. India is less mysterious: Tendulkar's discoveries are like those that might be made elsewhere. (IWC 49)

Illustrating Tendulkar's skill, style and views Naipaul widely discusses one of his plays Sakharam Binder. The protagonist of the play, Sakharam is a binder by profession. He is a typical man who is opposed to the institutions of marriage. He never marries, picks up women who have been thrown out to streets either by the circumstances or by their own husbands. He brings them home, provides them with food, clothes and even ornaments, and leads life with them. He commits a blunder when he kills one of his women for betrayal. In the end he is destroyed, but his fall has been made to feel heroic.

Naipaul feels that Tendulkar's writings are more appropriate to the Indian context than of Narayan's. He writes:

> With Sakharam we have come far from the simple rebellion of Jagan's son in The Vendor of Sweets, which could be satirized as un-Indian and mimicry of western manners. Sakharam's rebellion goes deeper, is immediately comprehensible, and it is entirely of India. India, coming late to situation that have been lived through elsewhere, becomes less mysterious. (IWC 50)

The prevailing rebellions at the time of his visit have made Naipaul to write so and it may not be true always.

At the end of this chapter, Naipaul writes about Gandhism. His extravagancy and exaggeration of facts is clearly visible here. He simply obeys his pre-planned notions about Gandhism. He never tries to get best out of it; instead he is more interested in its drawbacks. He flaw-fully writes:

> Gandhianism has had its great days; and the simple assertion of Indian antiquity won't do now. ... Its philosophy of withdrawal has diminished men intellectually and not equipped them to respond to challenge; it has stifled growth. So that again and again in Indian History has repeated itself: vulnerability, defeat, withdrawal. (IWC 53)

It is evident by these lines of Naipaul that he has never tried or he has failed to go deep into the reality and he is only satisfied by the surface reality. One gets bored by saying again and again that even today thousands of Indians

lead their life successfully by adopting the principles of Gandhi and the secret of India 's prosperity is mainly Gandhism, but Naipaul never gets bored to complain about Gandhi again and again.

In 'The Skyscrapers and the Chawls', the first chapter in the second part of Naipaul 's book which he calls 'A New Claim on the Land', he writes about the existing picture of Bombay city. As a proof to his keen observation and perception he gives us even the minutest of the details of this city. He provides us with the number of the beggars and the number of the people who sleep on the pavements. He depicts;

> It is said that everyday 1500 more people, about 350 families, arrive in Bombay to live. ... There is hardly room for the people already there. The older apartment blocks are full; the new skyscrapers are full; the small, low huts of the squatters' settlement on the airport road are packed tightly together. Bombay shows its overcrowding. ... one report says that 1,00,000 people sleep on the pavements of Bombay; but this figure seems low. And the beggars; are there only 20,000 in Bombay, as one news paper article says, or are there 70,000, the figure given on another day? ... The beggars have become a nuisance and a disgrace. By becoming too numerous they have lost their place in the Hindu system and have no claim on anyone. (IWC 57-58)

Louis Heren, considering the perception of Naipaul, here says: "A ... novelist of Mr.Naipaul 's stature can often define problems quicker and more effectively than a team economists and other experts from the world bank ".[29] Everything what Naipaul writes about the condition of Bombay is acceptable even though there is some amount of exaggeration. But one cannot accept his half-truth and mis-interpretation when he says that for Hindus ,the idea of beggary is precious. Truly speaking, Hinduism never encourages people to beggary; instead it philosophises to help the people who have already become beggars.

Naipaul makes description of the Maratha power right from the time of Shivaji to the present Shivasena rule. He befriends an Engineer who takes him to the chawls and explains him about the essential changes that are badly needed

to be brought in at Bombay. For example, communal washing areas, water supply, latrines etc., he praisingly writes about Gandhi 's love for municipal self-disciplined government. He appreciates Shivasena 's self-help policy for some extent. He acknowledges the achievements of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar who strived hard for the upliftment of the untouchables. Naipaul writes about the self-sufficient village life which prevailed in the past, the increase in the population becoming the main cause for its failure. As the population in these villages increased, the villagers migrated to Bombay in search of their livelihood. In this regard he quotes the words of a journalist whom he has encountered at Bombay and who spoke to him about the conditions of India impartially. The journalist had said to him that;

> ... the Indian village was self-sufficient and well ordered. The bull drew the plough and the cow gave milk and the manure of these animals enriched the fields, and the stalks of the abundant harvest fed the animals and thatched the village's huts. That was the good time. But self-sufficiently hadn 't lasted, because after a while there were too many people. (IWC 70)

Naipaul begins his chapter 'The House of Grain', with a praise for the farmers who have taken up a scheme themselves for the improvement of the irrigation system. He considers Bombay-Poona region as a highly industrialized area. He mocks at the mentality of the lazy labourers in India. He criticizes the power and position of the village Patel and Sarpanch. He visits a village about which he writes;

> But there was a grander: the Patel. The Surpanch was a shopkeeper, a money man; the Patel was a land owner, the biggest land owner in the village. He owned fifty good acres; and though he didn 't own people, the fate of whole families depended on the Patel. And to these people he was, literally, the Master. ... only four full sacks of grain, an older and truer symbol of wealth in this land of rock and drought. It was a house of plenty, a house of grain. ... She was a graduate! Though lost and modest in the gloom of the kitchen, stooping over the fire and the smoke, she was a graduate! ... In that village where needs were still so basic, the Patel, with his house of grain, ruled. ... (IWC 80-86)

Naipaul unhappily discovers that each and every man in the village was indebted to the Patel. But the Patel whom he meets, though was prejudiced, was a man who encouraged the improvements of his village and welcomed the modernity to come in. Naipaul gives stress on the point that there was no electricity for the poor in these villages and the darkness even spread over the minds of these villagers. He says that though some women were educated, yet their power and life was limited to kitchen. People in large migrated to cities like Bombay just because they couldn't tolerate the dictatorship of the Patel and for their failure to revolt against these men.

In the second part of this chapter Naipaul gives importance for the Naxalite movement and causes for the growth of Naxalism. He painfully says that though this Naxalism emerged with the purpose of the forceful implementation of land reforms, but in the present days it has grown up as a terrorist organization and thus banned by the Government.

In the chapter 'A Defect of Vision', we can find the observations and comments of Naipaul which outburst owing to his own defect of vision. His half-truths and misinterpretations are seen in abundance. Naipaul fails to accept the truth while writing about Gandhi's Autobiography, The Story of My Experiments with Truth, Naipaul mistakes it to be a literary Autobiography and criticises Gandhi for not having cared to write about the landscapes of England

> No London building is described, no streets, no room, no crowd, no public conveyance. The London of 1890, capital of the world -which must have been overwhelming to a young man from a small Indian town - has to be inferred from Gandhi's continuing internal disturbances, his embarrassments, his religious self-searching's, his attempts at dressing correctly and learning English manners, and, above all, his difficulties and occasional satisfactions about food. ... There is no attempt to an objective view of the world. As events pile up, the reader begins to be nagged by the absence of the external world; when the reader ceases to share or follow Gandhi's convictions, he can begin to feel choked. (IWC 98-101)

Gandhi was not an artist to consider the tastes of the readers. He just wrote his Autobiography with the mere intention of sharing his experiences he has undergone at the time of his experimentation with 'truth'. C.D.Narasimhaiah criticises Naipaul for mistaking Gandhi's Autobiography to a literary work and says: "Mr.Naipaul's queer mind never ceases to invent novel arguments to misdirect Indians. He accuses Gandhi of being too concerned in his Autobiography with internal life and not registering his response to external things except when they affect the inner man. Naipaul is aggrieved that no London building is described. ... He is surprised that there are no accounts of politics or politicians, only laint impressions of cranky theosophists and proselytizing vegetarians. Now Gandhi was not a writer: he recorded with artless simplicity the story of his 'Experiment with Truth', which is the title of his book, not a literary Autobiography".[30]

Naipaul, further, as if not satisfied in his act of degrading Gandhi, takes the help of Tolstoy to degrade Gandhi. Tolstoy once said;

> His Hindu nationalism spoils everything. (1WC 100)

Here one would like to say that if Tolstoy had lived till India became free, he would have withdrawn his statement. Once again one is inevitable to quote C.D.Narasimhaiah here who says; "Gandhi's strength, the world now knows after Attenborough's film on him, was precisely his 'Hindu Nationalism', because of its inclusiveness. Far from constructing his powers his Hinduism released him at each stage. Had Tolstoy lived a little longer he would have seen that it was his Hindu Nationalism that prompted him to suspend his Civil Disobedience movement when Hitler bombed St.Paul's Cathedral, because Gandhi didn't wish to make England's difficulty his opportunity, besides, for him, it was the same whether it was St.Paul's cathedral or the Vishwanth Temple at Banaras that was bombed".[31]

Naipaul in his usual manner of complaining and criticising dares to speak about the standard of the Indian intellectuals. His ignorance has never allowed him to accept the Indian standards. He carelessly writes:

> In an active, busy country, full of passion and controversy, it is not an easy thing to grasp, this negative way of perceiving. Yet it is fundamental to an under standing of India's intellectual second rateness, which is generally taken for granted but may be the most startling and depressing fact about the world's second most populous country, which now has little to offer the world except its Gandhian concept of holy poverty and the recurring crooked comedy of its holy men. (IWC 104)

C.D.Narasimhaiah himself being the first grade citizen of India hits back by saying that Naipaul; "... talks breezingly about Indians intellectual second-ratedness ... wonders if India did not retreat intellectually before Muslim and European invaders. ... Actually someone can write a good-length essay on Naipaul's self-contradictions. Had Naipaul chosen to speak of Indian's pusillanimity and incapacity to stand up to the invader he would have been incontrovertible. ... But to talk of Indian's intellectual second-rateness with a conspicuous absence of ifs and buts the mark of an educated mind, hardly helps to enhance his reputation as a writer".[32]

It seems that Naipaul has dedicated this chapter for the degradation of Hinduism. In this regard Ananthmurthy provides him an helping hand through his devastating work Samskara. In this novel Ananthmurthy portrays the life of an Acharya, a brahmin who marries a lame girl in a way to sacrifice and dedicate himself to 'Dharma'. He achieves name and fame through his virtues and principles. The tragedy begins when one of his brothers who practiced many illegal things dies. This man had a mistress who belonged to a low caste, he also had friendship with the Moslems. This brings complication and controversy to the mind of the. Acharya, whether to consider his brother to be a Brahmin or an outcaste at the time of his funeral. Later Acharya's life itself is in dilemma

when he comes into a sexual contact with a low caste girl. His wife dies out of plague, he gives up everything and leaves home as an act of self realisation, begins to wander from place to place. Naipaul compares and associates the life of this Acharya with the early life of Gandhi. They both seem to have had similar ideas of preserving purity, brotherhood, same limitation of vision and response, and the same self absorption. About Naipaul 's attitude of analysing Indian writers and their works, K.Venkatachari opines that; "Whether Naipaul is engaged in analysing the works of Indian writers like Anathmurthy, R.K.Narayan or Vijay Tendulkar or the Indian logics of motivation and aspiration, he seems unable to maintain an objective stance needed to define the Indian cultural consciousness. His own cultural nature over which he has little control has made him sensitive nature prickly which is what accounts for his scatological or malicious comment on the cultural configurations and responses which he has encountered in his land of promise and origins. His quest of roots ... factionalised one leaves him, 'outraged' rather than 'enlightened', since he is unable to assimilate Indian culture's 'mystic mythology' to his alfresco modernism. For him as for his 'rootless' protagonists there is no self-cherishing in the midst of a general distress, which he finds in Narayan 's Srinivas (Mr.Sampath) since their 'miasmal memory' (being compounded of only the *obiter dipta* of dispossession and degradation) has brewsed their souls giving rise to an unbled wound. Naipaul 's virtue lies in his being aware of it, since he identifies himself with those Indians who find that to be critical and not be swept away in a flood of archaic emotions is a much greater effort" .[33]

He begins his chapter, 'Synthesis and Mimicry' with a description of a young couple, Indian girl married to a foreigner, participating in a public gathering. Though they lived far away from India, they choose to visit India frequently. Naipaul criticises people for disliking India and its people just because of this sacred institution of marriage. This girl idealises and expresses her liking for the upliftment of the poor and beggars in Bombay. Naipaul switching on to the

topic of science and technology in India considers it very expensive to have science and technology in fuller extent. Yet he agrees that they are very useful and also essential in these days. While making note on the bullock carts he says that they are very expensive and he never knew about this. India invests on bullock carts as much money as it invests on its railways.

Naipaul gives us the history of Indian arts in brief. He says, India has revived its old dance forms, but its painting which had once been very bright has now become weak. What is true in Indian painting is also true of Indian architecture. However, there is synthesis between Hindu and Moslem art forms, today Indian art is, mimicry of the Western art forms and its own art forms are outdated. Naipaul writes:

> India is old, and India continues. But all the disciplines and skills that India now seeks to exercise are borrowed. Even the ideas Indians have of the achievements of their civilization are essentially the ideas given them by European scholars in the nineteenth century. India by itself could not have rediscovered or assessed its past. Its past was too much with it, was still being lived out in the ritual, the laws, and the magic - the complex instinctive life that muffles response and buries even the idea of inquiry. (IWC 129)

One can say that, in India everything is seen as mimicry. Even the loss of creativity passes un-noticed. It swallows its past. To understand its inwardness, it borrows heavily from abroad and particularly from Europe. It has the data, but no means to analyse it. Its art is very rich, but possesses no histories. Any kind of continual activity in India results in anarchy. Indian newspapers have now begun to reflect this defected narrow vision of Indians. In fact to know its inner reality, it has to look inward, Indians have to consult themselves. He feels that Indians doesn't have inquiring spirit, creative sensibility and self-examining power and patience. Naipaul argues that borrowed things in India no longer work as borrowed institutions, but as synthesised institutes'. In this way, they fail to understand the spirit of foreign ideas. In Naipaul's words:

> It might be said, rather, that for too long, as conquered people, they have been intellectually parasitic on other civilizations. To survive in subjection, they have preserved their sanctuary of the instinctive, uncreative life, converting that into a religious ideal; at a more worldly level, they have depended on others for the ideas and institutions that make a country work. The Emergency -coming so soon after independence - dramatizes India 's creative incapacity, its intellectual depletion, its defenselessness, the inadequacy of every India 's idea of India. (IWC 134)

Darshan Singh Maini disagrees with Naipaul 's words when he says; "The theme of mimicry - perhaps, the single biggest 'block' in Naipaul - is pressed into service to prove that all this progress is unauthentic, derivative and phony. ... Since India herself has not produced first-rate ideas or inventions. The west, in short, is parodied everywhere in India - in steel and plaster, in an and architecture, in painting and poetry. Naipaul, it appears to have in both ways. When we cling to the past traditions and values, it 's a cultural regression; when we want to give up some of these inhibiting things and move forward to Western ideals of science and liberal humanism, we become 'mimic men'. He would ideally see us in a state of 'stasis' if only to be able to continue his song: one wonders why it has not occurred to him that his own rhetoric and fictional art are by this criterion, the hand work of a 'mimic' artist. After all, he is not the inventor of the 'genres' he uses or of the techniques he employs in his stories and novels".[34]

Naipaul once again coming back to the Emergency criticises the act of imposing restrictions on the press. The press was forced to concentrate only on social aspects of life and not the political. Regarding the law and justice, Naipaul feels that they have been affected by tradition. He depicts an incident of a forceful marriage of a lawyer 's son and the cloth-seller 's daughter, failing to adjust with the restrictions laid on her by her husband and in-laws commits suicide. But justice was made in favour of her husband owing to tradition.

Naipaul begins his chapter 'Paradise Lost', by attempting to write about the evil consequences of the Emergency, which he comes to know from a woman who explains him some of the hard facts. He .writes about Jaya Prakash Narayan 's address to the students of a college who promised him to join him in prison, they never turned up; they remained neutral when time came. Men in order to protest against Mrs.Gandhi, made up their mind to sacrifice their lives in front of her house, but this never happened because of the light-heartedness of the protesters. People at this juncture for some extent protested against the arrest of Morarji Desai. Naipaul makes references to Nirad.C.Chaudhari 's book *To live or Not to Live* in which he writes about the Emergency period.

Naipaul meets a taxi-driver who desires to go to Gulf in order to earn huge amounts by this Naipaul intends to say us that many Indians have lost their interest in their country. He mocks at the mentality of the most of the Indians wanting to earn money through all possible ways. Naipaul criticises the attitudes of the Indians in mis-interpreting and misusing the principles of Gandhi to meet their own selfish ends. Gandhi always dreamt of Swarajya or Rama Rajya. Swaraj according to Gandhi 's dreams is to have local-self governments in the villages. Every village, every mohalla and town was expected to manage its own affairs. This was again the dream of Jaya Prakash Narayan. Naipaul shifts to the topic of Party system in India and considers congress to be the predominant party right from the time of Independence. Though Gandhi and J.P.Narayan tried in most possible ways to washout violence from the minds of the people, they failed utterly in making India free from communal and some internal disasters. They both worked hard for the upliftment of the socially and economically backward people. According to Naipaul the only drawback of J.P. Narayan was that he tried to culminate Gandhism and Marxism together.

Next, be brings in the history of King Porus and the invasions of Alexander. He depicts the personality and achievements of Swamy Vivekananda and thus brings forth the feelings of patriotism in the hearts of the people of Hindustan.

He gives us the character sketches of an old man who contested and competed with Mrs.Indira Gandhi in one of the general elections. This man belonged to the drought area, but he was considerably rich. He never gave up the principles of Gandhi. He strongly criticises the persons like Mrs. Gandhi who misused the principles of M.K. Gandhi and he himself was that kind of a man who would never give up those pearl like principles in his life time. He, speaking in his straightforward manner says that Mrs.Gandhi and her followers attempted to kill Gandhi by killing his principles deliberately.

Naipaul begins his final chapter 'Renaissance and Continuity', with the depiction of Gandhi 's life and struggle for Independence in India after his return from South Africa. Naipaul without any logic writes:

> Gandhi lived too long. (IWC 153)

One does not understand what Naipaul really meant, whether he intends to say that Gandhi should not have lived for such a long time or whether he wanted to say that Gandhi achieved very little even though he lived for such a long time. Whatever may be his intentions Indians are totally dissatisfied with his these words. Of course, one would agree with his argument that Gandhi 's unique ideas were not approved by all but they were welcomed by many.

Naipaul as usual finds fault even with the racial system in India. He says;

> The racial sense is alien to Indians. Race is something they detect about others, but among themselves they know only the sub caste or caste, the clan, the Bens, the language group. Beyond that they cannot go; they do not see themselves as belonging to Indians race; the words have no meaning. (IWC 154)

Yes, really India is proud to say that it is out of this social evil of racial system. India, being a secular state, is working hard to get rid of the communal feelings. One does not understand why here in this book Naipaul changes his mind. In his previous book *An Area of Darkness* he had complained about the

racial jealousy between the Aryans and the Dravidians. But here in this book, he writes as if he has withdrawn his statements made in his previous book. Thanks to Naipaul for realising that in India there exists no racial problem. Naipaul in search of his racial roots in India has moved fairly. But what he says about the caste feeling is acceptable though not wholly. He mockingly writes about Gujarathi Muslims calling themselves Arabs, Indian Christianity claiming only their Christianity and their reasonless desire not to mingle with the people of Madras and it is one of the examples of disintegrity.

In this whole chapter Naipaul deals with the rise and the end of Gandhi. He once again mentions the statements of Tolstoy regarding Gandhi. Naipaul goes on relating the things Gandhi did, with Hinduism. He writes;

> The racial message always merged into the religious one; and it involved him in what looked like contradictions. ... The difficult lessons of South Africa were simplified and simplified in India: Ending as a holy man 's fad for doing the latrine-cleaning work of untouchables, seen only as an exercise in humility, ending as a holy man 's plea for brotherhood and love, ending as nothing. (IWC 155-156)

One just cannot agree with Naipaul, Gandhi 's deeds and Hinduism are purely two different aspects and they must not be related. As T.R.S. Sharma says; "Gandhi 's obsessions are a fact, Naipaul 's ascription of them to Hinduism is rather unconvincing. One can protest that Gandhi is a typical, and so are many of our godmen, the learned ones I mean, whom the Hindu society periodically throws up, and many of whom India exports for foreign consumption. However, it is patent that the ordinary Hindu has two faces, the excessively worldly and the exuberantly godly, both co-existing in the same person, but without interaction, without contamination! "[35]

Further, without any hesitation Naipaul exaggeratingly writes:

> Now the people who fight about him fight about nothing; neither he nor old India has the solutions to the present crisis. He was the last expression of old

> India; he took India to the end of that road. All the arguments about the Emergency, all the references to his name reveal India's intellectual vacuum, and the emptiness of the civilization to which he seemed to give new life. ... idea of its past, it will not possess that past or be enriched by it. The past can now he possessed only by inquiry and scholarship, by intellectual rather than spiritual discipline. The past has to be seen to be dead; or the past will kill. (IWC 174)

C.D.Narasimhaiah criticising this attitude of Naipaul writes: "How shabbily, how inadequately, armed is Mr.Naipaul as he reacts to the phenomenon that was Gandhi! Gandhi, he says awakened India with the help of the past, the reason why for Naipaul Gandhism has not endured. ... If he had taken the trouble to read that much-anthologized essay of T.S.Eliot's, namely, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent': he should have known that tradition is the means by which the vitality of the past enriches not enervates, as he fears the life of the present. And thanks to Eliot, American Sociologists began to speak of the 'Usable Past'. But Naipaul has no use for the past -he lumps up all past and throws it into the dustbin. He exhorts us to kill the past or the past will kill".[36] Regarding Naipaul's continuous reference to 'the past' on which he feels Indians depend, T.R.S.Sharma evenly replies; "But one does take exception to Naipaul's advocacy of a clean break with the past. ... But to deny one's past completely is to reject one's history. Naipaul's statement therefore is incomplete. He doesn't answer the question, after rejecting the past, what next? ... At this point one may have to turn to Wole Soyinka, who has a positive response to offer on how to make sense of one's past, how to select from tradition, how to put the people again in touch with what they have lost".[37]

Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse who was an Hindu, at least this must have made Naipaul to realise that Gandhi's Hinduism has destroyed nothing but himself. Gandhi was killed because he never took the side of Hindus, instead he spoke impartially, and at the time of the partition of India in favour of the Muslims. After all Gandhi was not a fundamentalist, he followed his religion.

he was proud of his religion and at the same time he never had any jealousy about the religion other than his.

After Gandhi 's death Vinoba Bhave succeeded him. Vinoha Bhave lived all through his life as an able and eminent successor of Gandhi. He carried on all the principles and ideas of Gandhi, made it possible to reach the doors of Indians. Bhave was a self-built man in Gandhi 's Ashram. Naipaul feels that to speak about Gandhi and Gandhism is to speak about Bhave. Gandhi gave up sexual absistence at the age of thirty-seven, but Bhave had given (that) away in his childhood itself. Gandhi was made by London, the study of Law, the twenty years in South Africa, influences of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Gita. But Bhave was made only by Gandhi 's Ashram and India. In one sense Bhave has swallowed his master, Gandhi. Bhave, in the vanity of his spiritual perfection, is more than a decadent Gandhian. Naipaul criticises the spirituality of Gandhi and Bhave and gives call for the rejection of their principles. K.Venkatachari defends by saying: "Mahatma Gandhi 's or Bhave 's message offers hope because cynicism and nihilism will prevail when one seems incapable of surrendering to life in general 'in basic trust', which may well be regarded as one of the eternal verities".[38]

Naipaul smells the similarity even in their agitations. He feels that Gandhi launched his agitation against British for Independence and against the human-slaughter in communal clashes, whereas Bhave struggled his best for the re-distribution of land and the abolition of cow-slaughter.

Naipaul switches on to the topic of industrialisation. He says that, now because of the rapid industrialisation, development in science and technology and the steps taken under the Five Year Plans have made India the fourth largest producer of grains in the world. Till the end of this chapter, he discusses about the concept of 'Dharma'. Once again he misinterprets it, the concept of Dharma in reality teaches one to be devoted to his duty and he must worship his duty. One must not interfere in other man 's duty until it is forcefully necessary. But Naipaul never catches hold of this concept.

In the concluding lines of the book he pessimistically writes:

> The crisis of India is not political: this is only the view from Delhi. Dictatorship or rule by the army will change nothing. Nor is the crisis only economic. These are only aspects of the larger crisis, which is that of a decaying civilization, where only hope lies in further swift decay. (IWC 174-175)

He writes all this as if India will seize to exist within a short span of time from now. As an artist he must not have grown so pessimistic. Of course, India is a wounded civilization, but Naipaul instead of trying to assume the healing of this wound through his writing tries to harm even more to the already wounded civilization. He tries to pursue everything negatively and writes negatively as some writers write negative as they believe that by writing negatively and by creating controversies they can gain popularity. About Naipaul, C.D.Narasimhaiah opines that; "He seems to me to write for the same reason that many ossified academics publish are else they must perish".[39]

Regarding Naipaul's statement 'only hope lies in further swift decay', Darshan Singh Maini says: "So far as India is concerned, Naipaul seems entirely to forget that though humiliated in arms, ravaged and torn, over and over again it has managed to remain afloat in the teeth of all assaults on her dignity and entity. This is because its spiritual buffers are strong enough to absorb all such shocks ... otherwise; the Indian civilization should have by now gone the way of the death-oriented Mayan civilization, a Dinosaur of history. On the contrary we find in the post-independent India a willed and determined effort to modernise her dream".[40]

However, Naipaul 's delineation of India is not accepted by Indians in two of his depiction of India. either as an 'area of darkness' or 'wounded civilization' is imperfect. In a sense it is unrealistic. The reasons are crystal clear. Naipaul, an unhappy Trinidad-Indian, visits India with a Western eye. He comes to India almost in a mood of irreverence and belligerency. He arrives here with a payload

of prejudice and a freight of complexes. True in his article "The Complex Fate of V.S.Naipaul", D.S.Maini asserts that; "Naipaul appears to have little respect for, and less understanding of, the vast sociological and psychic changes now under way in Indian".[41]

Indian critics state that it is, due to his lost identity and double alienation, Naipaul writes negatively about India and his own confusion regarding his confused identity has contributed a lot to his negativeness.

Nevertheless, it must he said that what Naipaul writes about India is not wholly untrue. His assertion that India is oppressed by yoke of foreign rule and its own limitations are acceptable. He expresses with pain his own dissatisfaction for the inward million minute revolutions underway in India. This may be logically seen in the next part of this chapter "India : *A Million Mutinies Now*".

4.4. INDIA : A MILLION MUTINIES NOW

For the third time V.S. Naipaul, comes to India in December 1988 and visits many states in his 14 months' stay and completes his third, and possibly the final travelogue on India. India: *A Million Mutinies Now*, (1990) is the third sequential travelogue of Naipaul on India. Apart from recording the accounts of prevalent social, economic and political conditions, he also depicts the opinions of the people whom he interviews. But one thing is clear, Naipaul has idealised these opinions and the book is full of opinions and conversations and nothing more than that. K.C. Belliappa regarding the nature of the book opines that; "Naipaul adopts entirely a different strategy in this book. Unlike in the earlier two books on India, he chooses to interview individuals from different professions, backgrounds, religions and states. And what he does is to merely record their answers to his probing questions which are mostly factual in nature and rarely twin to be leading questions. In other words, he lets his subjects speak for themselves and his comments are few and far between. In terms to fictional strategy, he resorts to 'showing' and only occasionally indulges in 'telling'".[42]

It is evident through this book that Naipaul has overcome the nervousness and confusion which he had carried all along with him on his previous visits. As he himself admits in the concluding pages of this book;

> In 27 years I had succeeded in making a kind of return journey, shedding my Indian nerves,. abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past.(M.M. 516)

He has written this book keeping his earlier two books in mind. It is another revision, another re-seeing of what had been wrongly judged in the past two books. They seem to be inconclusive. He has not succeeded in bringing the various aspects of India and the life of her people within the ambience of nationally, or even culturally.

He gets down at Bombay port and as usual, he notices the crowds and squatters' settlements. He is baffled when he looks at the never ending long queue of men who have stood there to honour Ambedkar, their dead leader. Later he meets Namdev, the leader of Dalit panther in Bombay. His subsequent visits to Mr. Patil, Mr. Raote and Mr. Ghate show him the picture of Shivasena activities that are still going on in Maharashtra. Each of these leaders of Sena tells him tales about religiosity, theism and castism in India. Then Naipaul via Goa comes to Bangalore. His visit to M.P. Prakash convinces the harsh reality that is associated with the corrupt Indian politics. Later Naipaul comes to Madras and, as we read, he meets Veeraswami, the leader of Anti-Aryan and Brahmin Movement who tells the history of Dravidian civilization. He also narrates him the story of Self-Respect movement started by Periyar. Having realized the South Indian life, Naipaul goes to Bengal where he meets Dipanjan and Debu who narrate the stories related to Naxalbari and Communist Movements in the states of Bengal, Bihar and Andhra. In Lucknow , Naipaul, as Rashid and Amir tell understands much about Muslim life in India that is beset by many communal crisis. While in Punjab , two IAS officers Gurtej Singh and Kapur Singh unveil

the story of Sikhism in India and Naipaul is told about the tragic life of *'Sant'* Bhindranwale.

The travelogue is full of descriptions about conflicts and revolutions that are still underway in India, Naipaul , with his powerful narrative capacity, explains us how silent and harsh mutinies are being worked out in India. Naipaul praisingly accepts these changes. Bruce King feels that; "Returning to India during a time when others form the collapse of the Indian central state because of regional , caste and religious conflicts, Naipaul finds signs of vitality and renewal. There is now a new wealth, a new national economy controlled by Indians and not by foreigners. Many people are prosperous and others can hope to improve their conditions. Notions of freedom and self-assertion have moved from the elite to a broader range of society. A notion of India has been restored, after having been lost for centuries and it is this sense of identity which is being challenged by further claims of recognition. ... Where Naipaul formerly sought a tradition but found decay and chaos, now he has come to accept that life consists of change and to find interest in the ways that people strive to change their lives for the better. In these twenty-seven years between his first visit to India and his current one, Naipaul and the India he observes have changed in analogous ways. They have changed from the confusions that accompanied independence to the many voices and perspectives of the post-colonial" .[43]

India: *A Million Mutinies Now* is more voluminous and less artistic travelogue than the other two travelogues in which he exposes the image of the crisis-stricken modern India. It displays how thousands of both - silent and disturbing events and conflicts are at work for the betterment of life in India. A true picture of hundreds of mutinies is delineated by Naipaul in this travelogue. No doubt, India: *A Million Mutinies Now* holds a mirror to the ongoing turbulences that are underway in 20th century India.

India: *A Million Mutinies Now* is Naipaul 's most authentic work on India, his fore father 's homeland. The book is divided into nine chapters. The book

runs to five hundred and twenty-one pages. The language, diction and style, the mode of narration and the track of incidents or events told are very simple but quite convincing and effective. Each of the chapters is a depiction of a variety of mutinies of the present day. They are picturesque and life-like. The mutinies, the men who involved in them and the victims are realistic. They display the crux of the statements that India is developing and prospering with its own fluxes and refluxes. The details enshrined here are certainly striking.

Naipaul depicts a variety of events in this travelogue. The mutinies he writes about are either mutinies in the real sense of the term or they are movements. A few of them that can be mentioned easily are Shivasena movement and Dalit Panther Movement in Bombay, a Secretary's life that indicates a healthy change of life, inter-caste marriage in the line of Westerners, the mode of corruption in many fields but particularly in politics, changes, litter wars like the Dravidian Progressive Movement, Self-Respect Movement, Anti-Aryan, Hindu and Brahmin Reform Movements. To this list, insurgency or terrorist movements like the Tamil Tigers Movements, Naxalbari, Peasant and Communist Movements, can be added. Besides, the process of woman's emancipation, change in the way of life and attitude towards it are something what impress the author. But the vehicular and human crowds, the squatter settlements, the chawls, and the shadows of the Sikh Gurus that have resulted in terrorism in Punjab really hurt him. No matter what ever may be the events narrated here, the travelogue is a enjoyable piece of work. Bruce King finds; "It is like his other recent books, well populated, and filled with the voices of a wide variety of people who are allowed to speak for themselves without much authorial commentary. Opinions, views, possible solutions are allowed to clash. The interest is more in what has created such voices than in imposing an order".[44]

Shivasena Movement in Bombay is a regional movement. The movement is named not after Shiva or Maheshwar one of the trinities of Indian godhood,

but it is named after Shivaji, the great leader of the seventeenth century who fought against the Moghuls and founded the Maratha empire.

Ambedkar, a great Indian brought a miraculous change in the lives of Harizans through his writings and reforms. He arranged many reformatory movements and he is also responsible for the formation of the Constitution of India. His followers and a several thousands of Harizans are working as reformers of their communities. But only a few of them are truly following and benefiting from the reservation policies he created for them. But those people who worship him waste their lives without living as human beings. Such people, when Naipaul had come to India had arranged a huge function to honour the dead leader. Namdeo, one of the genuine followers of Ambedkar says:

> Emotional Dalits will sacrifice anything and everything for Ambedkar. He is not an extra god for them. He is God. They would slaughter their wife. Anything for Ambedkar. (M.M. 108)

No doubt, to the Dalits, Ambedkar is a leader, a saint and a deity. He is all in all. For the sake of continuing this grandee 's struggle to improve the lives of Dalits, they have started different movements in India. Dalit Panther is one of them. It is founded by Namdeo, a Marathi Dalit poet. It is parallel even to the Shivasena and it is in the line. of Black Panther of America. He is working very hard for the welfare of the down-trodden people. He organises diverse activities and through his poetry and speeches he brings certain fundamental changes in the higher caste Hindus. The leader of the movement is Bal Thackeray, a failed cartoonist. Mr. Thackeray started this movement with the help of his father, two brothers and with the support of eighteen members which included Mr.Raote who narrates the history of them to Naipaul in Bombay. Shivasena men led a political strike in 1960 in order to see that Bombay and Maharashtra are only for Maharashtrians. They opposed the great influx of outsiders to Bombay. They made some jingoistic rules for their state. For many years they ruled the Municipalities of many cities including Bombay. In this regard, Naipaul meets

Mr. Patil, Mr. Raote and Mr. Ghate. Each of them tells him about the different aspects of Shivasena activities. Mr.Patil, a believer and a great devotee of Lord.Ganapathi, states him that Sena men conduct many activities with a view to oust Muslims from India or at least to marginalise them. While Mr.Raote, who got married to a lady who belonged to the caste other than his, led a busy life, asserts that Bombay is only for the Maharashtrians. But Mr.Ghate 's attitude to life is somewhat typical. He thinks about strict regionalism. His personal life is confusing. He married a lady whom he loved but he opposed his sister when she married the man she liked. These three Sena activists tell the author many things about Bal Thackeray and Shivasena activities in Bombay. However his feeling that the Sena which seems quite irrelevant to the context of India as a nation exhibits his sensibility and the attitudes towards them. He states;

> The roles are not separate. I am against this caste system. I express it in my politics and in my poems. Poetry is a political act. Politics is part of my poetry. (M.M.116)

In the chapter 'Breaking out', Naipaul writes about the agricultural aspects and topography of India. He thinks that although India was ruled and exploited by many foreign races and rulers, now it is rapidly flourishing. The beautiful rabi corps, the irrigated lands, the fertile soil and industrial revolution engage his intellect. But he appears unhappy about the vehicular and human crowds that he sees in Bombay and elsewhere. The chawl life, the dirty squatters ' settlements the overcrowded bazaars and inhuman atrocities committed by the rich disheartens him. He expresses his dissatisfaction towards the beggary, the degeneration of the rich and exploitation of the poor that is rampant in India. He is happy by the changes underway in India. At this juncture Naipaul frankly admits that;

> Cruelty, yes it was in the nature of Indian family life. The clan that gave protection and identity, and saved people from the void, was itself a little state, and it could be a hard place, full of politics, full of hatreds and changing alliances and moral denunciations. It was the kind of family life I had known for much of my childhood: an early introduction to the ways of the world, and to the nature of

> cruelty. It had given me... a taste for the other kind of life, the solitary or less crowded life ,where one had space around oneself. (M.M. 178)

To this Bruce King says; "Naipaul 's writing has moved with our era from the confusions of decolonization, with its suspicious, humiliations ,and continuing dependency, to what is often termed the post-colonial, a joyful acceptance of the energies, cultural achievements, conflicting claims and freedoms that have resulted from independence along with the increased wealth, transportation and communication of recent decades. Although Naipaul 's writings are a record and analysis of such changes there is a sub text - the soil from which they have been nourished is himself" .[45]

Another aspect that shocks the Trinidadian humanist is the corruption in Indian politics. In fact, corruption is in all fields and all climes and times. However, corruption in Indian politics is rampant. When he meets M.P. Prakash, a state minister of Karnataka, in the South, he comes to know that rampancy of bribery is high in politics. Prakash, in the words of the author, an educated and competent minister, a shrewd and serious politician, tells him about exploitation of people by political leaders. He says bribery and theft are not bothered about here. The upper class in India take theft for granted. According to the minister only the middle class society still maintain human values and worry about theft and corruption. Corruption, is in the social fiber and everywhere.

> It 's in the social fibre, as I say. In the old days the Maharajas used to get their land revenue. But in addition to that people would go and offer them gift - gold, ornaments, fruits, coconuts. They would offer it on a plate, and the plate would be of brass or silver, according to your status. The present day Maharajas are the ministers. Indira Gandhi was a Maharani. (M.M.184).

But to become an MLA or an MP caste is a strong element in India. Caste is the first thing of importance. The candidate who wants to be elected must belong to a dominant caste and mobilize his position and vote bank. Power

achieved in this way here is very great. And the fall, the loss of power, as Prakash states is equally great and could be very hard to bear. The power gives so much of comfort, perks and status - a bungalow, all fully furnished, and personal attendants and well-lettered staff. Indeed, according to the minister, to become rich, respected and powerful, power is essential.

Although Naipaul visited India twice earlier in 1962 and 1975, he did not understand much about the Dravidian politics and their way of life. Dravidians are the natives of India. They founded Harappa and Mohenjodaro in 2000 B.C and later were attacked by central Asian Aryans. Dravidians have 5000 years of history. Their culture was known as Sangam culture that flourished in 2000 B.C. in the South. Many famous and benevolent dynasties like Chera, Chola, Pandya, Chalukya, Hoysala and Pallavas ruled the South from the dawn of Indian History. However, the arrival of Aryans and their aggressive policies quicken the process of Dravidians ' defeat and retreat towards the South. In the South, Tamil Nadu is their strong hold. Dravidians are mainly of middle and low caste people. They were oppressed by the Aryans and Brahmins. They are just like the down-trodden Dalits. As a result of the independence, modern education and Western impact, some of the leaders like Periyar, Prabhakaran. Veeraswami and others have begun their struggles to reform their communities. A few such activities are being carried out by the leaders of Self-Respect Movement, Dravidstan Movement and Anti-Aryan, Hindu and Brahmin Movements.

Periyar is the leader of Self-Respect Movement (1925). He belonged to a backward caste. lie was an atheist but a rationalist. With the help of the people like Veeraswami, he began Self-Respect Movement. His objectives were to accentuate the welfare measures for the middle and lower classes of the society. In this regard, he was anti-Gandhian. Annadurai tells Naipaul about the contrast between these two leaders who worked for the cause of those who have the wood and tilled the land without any enjoyment of them:

> Gandhi was a vegetarian. Periyar made a pais of atig beef. Gandhi struggled to control the senses. Periyar ate saws quantity of food, and was enormously fat. (M.M. 218)

He was an anti-hero. He preached a crude kind of Socialism. There was his inherited feeling for the practical sides of life. He wore black shirt. Black - shined, he campaigned for the rest of his life, for nearly five decades, against Brahminism, caste. Congress, the Hindu religion and the disabilities of women. Naipaul is told that he established the idea of Self-Respect marriages for non-Brahmins, and marriages were conducted without priests or religious vows. Once for having burnt the Constitution of India he was imprisoned. He offered a vision of a future, bright with the fruits of science, and without the need for the idea of God or religion:

> Communications will mostly be by air and of great speed... Radios may be fixed in men's hats... Food enriched with vitamins will be encased in pills or capsules sufficient for a day's or a week's sustenance. The average life may stand at 100 years or more... Motorcars may weigh about one hundred weight and will run without petrol... Electricity will be everywhere and in every house, serving the people for all purposes... No industry or factory will run for the private profits of individuals. They will all be owned by the community at large, and all inventions will cater for the needs and pleasures of all people... When the world itself has been converted into a paradise, the need to picture a paradise in the clouds will not arise. Where there is no want, there is no need for speculation and imagination... The struggle for existence needs to be changed into a life of happiness. (M.M.220)

Periyar's Self-Respect movement was continued by his disciple Veeraswami. Veeraswami, a Tamilian, hated the Aryans and Brahmins. Therefore, he disliked the Northerns and the North. He stood for Dravida Munitra Kalagam Party, which even aspired for a separate nation called Dravidstan. This was in the line of Sikh's demand for a 'Khalistan', Dalits 'Dalithastan' and Prabhakaran's demand for Tamil Tigers in Srilanka. However, irrelevant and discordant it was, it created much disorder in Tamilnadu.

However India is a democratic country in the lines of USA,UK and others, a cross-section of them worked for creation of Communism. This is explicit in the peasant movement of the far South, Naxalbari movement of Bihar, Bengal and Andhra and the Communist movement of Bengal. Naipaul in his journey comes across certain leaders of these autotellic movements which were formed on the doctrines of Marx, Lenin, and Moa, the great Communist leaders. When the author, by chance, meets Dipanjan, a leader of Communist movement in Calcutta, he tells all the story of the drastic underground activities carried out by them. The writer 's details about the nature, rise and scope of the Communism in India is very precise but vivid and authentic. He writes:

> The burnt-out Maoists I had met in Madras had been on the periphery of a much larger peasant movement. This movement had its centre in Bihar and Bengal, almost 1000 miles to the North-East• and it had been at its most active in the late 60s and early 70s. Communism in Bengal had a long history. It was another colonial import, one of the things that had come after the New Learning of the 19th century, and the mixed culture. Even now, in the dead British-built city, and almost as an aspect of its death, there were frequent. Solemn Communist marches through the litter and rubble and hopelessness. Even now, while a Communist parry ruled in the state, people, could still be moved by the poetry of red flags and revolution. (M.M. 299)

Dapanjan, a Ph.D. degree holder from London, is a sub-leader of this movement. As an active participant of Red-Guard Action he narrates to Naipaul, how they carried out many under-ground activities with the peasants to kill the zamindars. The Communalist fervour of them was very strong and instead of showing their patriotism for India, often they said that 'China 's Chairman is our Chairman ' and they sent their articles to be broadcast on Peking Radio. Charu Mazumdar was the leader of Communist movement in India and he mobilized all the underground activities. Debu, another activist tells Naipaul of Charu Majumdar 's appearance. He says Charu was a thin, short man with glasses. He dressed in shirt and dhoti. The clarity of his speech and expression was very

great. He had enormous energy and his movements were swift. And by God, he could inspire and do anything. He used to order his men to kill the zamindars either individually or in groups, so that they would sense the crisis and donate their extra land to the working class.

The latest events and mutinies are the result of the tension aroused by the politicians in India and they drive home a significant point here. According to Dipanjan almost all the political or religious leaders say something new, and ask people to follow them for harmonious co-existence. But over the march of years and events, followers of each leader become a sect, and their leaders become idols. This happened with all great people such as Buddha, Gandhi and Ambedkar. People do not accept the ideas and message of their leaders. When the author asks the Communist leader Dipanjan, about Gandhianism, the latter reiterates:

> 'Gandhi ?' 'Of the many ideals of Gandhi which the Indians didn't accept, ahimsa', nonviolence, stands out most'. 'The Jains ?' 'They're a strange sect. But it's the wrong perspective of India you have, when you mention these religions - Buddhism, Jainism, and Gandhi. I point to what happened in Kampuchea, Ceylon, Burma, China - all countries ostensifly under the umbrella of Buddha and Confucius. All these peoples are very violent'. (M.M. 325)

In the chapter 'The End of the Line', Naipaul writes about the degeneration of Muslim community caused by their own ignorance, and wrong attitude to life and religion. Rashid, a graduate of Lucknow tells Naipaul that the brethren of him are in their miserable condition after the partition. He thinks that partition did not bring any positive values to them. He says- that the Muslims lost everything that was related to their glory and status. Their religion is in a disastrous condition, their people are in penury, and their culture is vanishing away. They think that the partition split their families. The Muslims sent their children to Hindi schools and did not teach them Urdu. Rashid says they literally murdered Urdu. Later the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 still degenerated their relationship with the Hindus. The myth of Muslim superiority is finished. Their

dreams have died. They have lost their identity and they are rudderless now. The following details, said by Rashid display the condition of Muslims in India today:

> 'At the most the only education the children get is the Koran. The women are not educated. They in freed a lot. First cousins get married. That explains some of the physical degenerality. The boys marry young, at fifteen or sixteen or seventeen. At forty a man is a grandfather, and burnt out. They eat badly. Meat and bread and no vegetables. They have poor sanitation. Most of them never meet a Hindu or non-Muslim in their lives... (M.M.360)

This at best explains the fact that Muslims lost their identity, glorious buildings, monuments, culture and the relationships.

The chapter 'Woman's Era' displays the emancipation of women in modern India. Now any woman is as free as man. She has moral liberty to do whatever she likes. She can tell her parents whether or not she wants to marry a particular man. No matter whatever is her religion, she has gained a certain amount of freedom which has brought her, contentment and prosperity.

In this regard, according to Naipaul, Press is to be appreciated for its publication of a variety of magazines to create awareness in womenfolk. *Women's Era* is a magazine edited by Vishwanath, a journalist from Delhi. This magazine has become well known in India and it has damaged the older magazines *Woman's Weekly* and *Woman's Own* edited by the British in India. In fact, it is the first magazine of its kind in India. Its objective is to create awareness in women so that they will be able to escape from the drudgery of their lives in the male-dominated traditional life. *Femina*, another magazine dedicated for the cause of woman brings woman's glamour, image, shock and their fascination to the fore front. However, the magazine Savvy is a scandalous one. Its aim is to focus on the disastrous issues like divorce, illicit love-affairs, eye-teasing and woman living both with her husband and lover. No matter whatever might be its theme this magazine is very popular now.

At the very outset of the chapter 'The Shadow of the Gum', Naipaul writes;

> To awaken to history was to cease to live instinctively. It was to begin to see oneself and one 's group the way the outside world saw one; and it was to know a kind of rage. India was now full of this rage. There had been a general awakening. But everyone awakened first to his own group of community; every group thought itself unique in its awakening; and every group sought to separate its rage from the rage of other groups. (M.M. 420)

Bruce King interprets these words of Naipaul as; "Naipaul sees such renewal as beginning with the peace the British had imposed on India after the mutiny of 1857. Until then the country was the victim of repeated Muslim invasions and was divided among various groups who, because of local politics, had taken sides with foreign invaders. British rule brought unity and began a period of scholarship which reconstructed a sense of national identity, led to the nationalist movement and independence. Notions of freedom continued to develop and supported by recent economic changes, created the energy and demands for recognition that characterize the present." [46]

Naipaul writes about Sikhism in India. He meets Mr. Gurutej Singh, an IAS officer who resigned his post just only to serve his religion. Kapur Singh who too was an IAS officer due to his political activities was dismissed. Gurutej served Bhindranwale, the saint. Gurutej tells Naipaul how GuruNanak found the religion and how the successive gurus started a lunger; built the Golden Temple; wrote the 'Granth'; and founded the 'Khalsa', for the growth and development of Sikhism, a new religion in India.

Gurutej tells Naipaul that Sikhs hated Brahmins, hence the new religion came into existence. But the Muslims who were very barbarous disturbed Sikhs a good deal and killed a few of their gurus, and many times massacred the Sikhs. As a result, Sikhs were compelled to become terrorists to save themselves. But after the Independence, due to ignorance some Sikhs became militants. Besides,

the Government of India encouraged some Sikhs to reform their faith. One sect of them known as Nirankaris. Gurutej says, began to bring some reforms which were opposed by the traditional minded Sikhs under the leadership of Bhindranwale. These reasons made the Sikhs fight against one another or against the Government, and thus, terrorism began in Punjab.

Bhindranwale said Sikhism is a revealed religion and Sikhs are people of the Book. Their gurus are prophets of their religion. They hold the view that irreligiousness is the root cause of misery. And so later on the Nirankari sect, which was like the Hindu religious reform movement was hunted down by Bhindranwale and his followers. Gurutej says to serve their leader, and their faith, men went out with the mission of killing Hindus. They stopped buses and killed the travellers. Later the terrorist activities spread to the Golden Temple and when the army entered it, Bhindranwale was killed. In his article 'Genesis of the Sikh Problem in India', Gurutej writes about the cry of Sikhs in bewilderment. The book is about the isolation of the Sikh faith and ideology from the Hindu; it further explains that Punjab is geographically and culturally more a part of Middle East than of India. According to the Sikhs, Brahminism is the great enemy of the Sikhism.

Now India is a land of million mutinies, due to regional, cultural, religious and socio-political problems and conflicts. The destructive Chauvinism of Shivasena the tyranny of the rich, exploitation of the poor, religious fundamentalism are emerging . Corruption, racial politics of the South, the pious Marxist idleness and nullity of Bengal are added. But these mutinies are inevitable. Naipaul concludes:

> Excess was now felt to be excess in India. What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the general intellectual life, and the wholeness and humanism of the values to which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And - strange irony - the mutinies we're not be wished away. They were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of India 's growth, and part of its restoration. (M.M. 518)

India: *A Million Mutinies Now*, is Naipaul 's last and the gentlest travelogue on India. Nevertheless, it is an excellent piece of work in the genie of journalistic writing. In the words of Paul Theroux," It is literally the last word on India today, witness within witness, a chain of voices that illustrates every phase of Indian life... with truthfulness and a subtlety that are a joy to read. Something like love enters the narrative - a real feeling for the land and its people ".[47]another critic K.C. Belliappa opines that; "The book indeed is different, for it is free from the early Naipaul 's attitudes and his chief weapons, irony and satire. This is made possible because Naipaul sees India on its own terms. Naipaul is perhaps still in the process of finding the centre. But it is significant that he has finally made a beginning". *'India*: *A Million Mutinies Now*, undoubtedly, displays Naipaul 's concern for the land - indeed now 'an area of awakening '.[48]

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Chapter: Five

PORTRAYAL OF INDIA IN

A HOUSE FOR MR BISWAS

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PORTRAYAL OF INDIA IN *A HOUSE FOR MR BISWAS*

5.1. Introduction

While the first three novels of V S Naipaul, examined the social and political aspects of colonial Trinidad Indian community the fourth and most successful one, *A House for Mr. Biswas* delves deep into the psyche of an Indian individual to reveal the major problem of the disposed individual. There is an essential difference in approach between the first three novels, [*The Mystic Masseur*, *Miguel Street* and *The Mimic Men]* and *A House for Mr. Biswas*. The first three novels end on a negative note with the protagonists' rejection of their societies, whereas *A House for Mr. Biswas* endorses a positive approach to the problem of displacement among the Trinidad Indians.

The first section of 'A House for Mr. Biswas', Called 'Pastoral's, narrate the birth and early life of Mr. Biswas. In this section, Naipaul depicts the (Hindu) immigrant Indian Hindu way of life through its fullest expression in the customs, traditions, rituals and the social philosophy of the people. It is here where Naipaul's novel represents Indians like Bipti's father, who came to Trinidad as indentured labourers and reproduces the **'image of India'** that they had created in Trinidad. The **'image of India'** that is presented through the vivid representation of the complete communal life, is made evident through their superstitious beliefs, their faith in the pundit, the customs and rituals they follow.

Mr. Biswas, in *A House for Mr. Biswas* tries to overcome the limitations imposed on him by putting up a relentless struggle against the forces that try to suppress his individuality. Though his struggle is a long and traumatic one, still he is successful in his negotiation for space and finally fulfills his dream of having a house of his own. This is a remarkable achievement of a man like Mr. Biswas within his limited and mediocre circumstances. This tussle can also be looked at as the one between the colonizer and the colonized and displaced India.

Manjit Inder Singh observes that "Mr. Biswas may be colonized in the physical, economic and political sense, but his emotional urge for freedom, his sensibility to humiliation and slavery are signs of a temperament that bristles with rebellion subversion."[1]

An ordinary mans struggle to establish himself in the initiative, transient and colonial Indian society in Trinidad, traced with humor, pathos and universal implications is what we get see in one of the masterpieces *A House for Mr Biswas* produced by VS Naipaul The novel is very much considered auto biographical, the theme of the novel correlates it self with the life of Naipaul's father Seepersad Naipaul, and early life of Naipaul himself.

What Naipaul has done, is to abstract from his father's life, not just a sequence of events, instead a quality of experience which he has shaped in such a way as to project his own vision of its significance. The novels is based on fact, but only in the sense that from the fact Naipaul has distilled a philosophy where he rearranges the facts to express his intentions.

The broad outlines of Mr. Biswas's career are taken from Naipaul's early life. Naipaul's family had lived in places corresponding to those mentioned in the novel. Here Chaguanas becomes Awakes, Tunapuna become Pagotes, Verdant Vale becomes Green Vale, Chase village becomes The Chase, Petit Valley in Diego Martin becomes Short hills. Many of the characters fall in the same line

Naipaul's elder and younger sisters are indeed named Savi and Kamala but in the reverse order. Anand's rival at the Queens Royal College is his cousin Vidiadhar, Vidiadhar is of course, Naipaul's own name. Anand is borrowed from his cousin, RN Premanand. The various houses in the book are fictionalized only in their address. The Lion House, Chaguanas, where Naipual was born, becomes Hanuman House. The Lions on the balustrade being changed to images of Hanuman, the monkey god.

One can say that the success of the novel can be attributed to the imaginative reconstruction of Naipaul's father Seepersad Naipaul's life. Seepersad Naipaul, like Mr. Biswas, comes from a rural Hindu Background, had somehow established himself as a journalist for the *Trinidad Guardian*, and aspired to be a writer of stories. In the novel Mr. Biswas joins the *Sentinel* and gains apprenticeship in the journalistic career.

Both Seepersad Naipaul and Mr. Biswas, get to learn in their respective offices is not so much the art of faithful reportage, but transforming mundane events into eye catching, sensational, and fantastic stories. Seepersad Naipaul also shared Mr. Biswas dissatisfaction with the Hindu community which defined him, and his skepticism towards conservative Hinduism and its communal rituals and conventions. Naipaul himself in his 'Prologue to an autobiography' while writing about his father's collection of short stories '*Gurudeva and other Indian Tales* (1943) feels that.

"These stories celebrated Indian village life, and the Hindu rituals that gave grace and completeness to that life, they also celebrated elemental things, the order of the working day, the labours of the rice fields, the lighting of the cooking fire in the half walled gallery of a thatched hut, the preparation and eating of food".[2]

It is found that Biswas is born past midnight, with six fingers and in a wrong way. His grandmother, who also plays the role of the mid wife at the time

of his birth, immediately goes to the neighbouring village. She gets a type of cactus, strips it and hangs at every inlet and outlet of the house so as to ward off evil spirits. A pundit is followed in to check and prepare Biswas's horoscope. The pundit researches into his astrological almanac, prophesies that Biswas would eat up his parents, would become a liar, lecher and a spend thrift, and would have the 'unlucky sneeze,' the pundit recommends;

> "Keep him away from rivers and ponds. And of course the sea... much of the evil this boy will undoubtedly bring will be mitigated if his father is forbidden to see him for twenty one days.... You must fill this brass plate with coconut oil which, by the way, you must make yourself from coconuts you have collected with your own hands - and in the reflection on this oil the father must see his son's face"(AHMB. 17)

Bissoondaye follows the recommendations of the pundit, pin-to-pin, and only on the twenty first day, Raghu, Biswas's father was allowed to have a first view of his son. There after Raghu does not allow his son Biswas to bathe in a pond or river and stops going to work whenever he sneezes. But he fears that his unlucky son will make him a pauper and therefore, tries to save as much money as he can by depriving his family of many needs. One day he finds his son missing with the calf of his neighbour and fears that he might have drowned himself in the village pond. Unfortunately, he drowns himself when he jumps into the pond to recover his son's body, while his son in hiding himself under the bed at home. Thus the son eats his father in accordance with the prediction made by the pundit. Consequently Biswas's mother, Bipti undergroes her initiation into widowhood in the traditional manner.

> " Bipti was bathed, her hair, still wet, was nearly parted and parting filled with red henna. Then the henna was scooped out and the parting filled with charcoal dust. She was now a widow forever. Tara gave a short scream and at her signal the other woman began to wail. On Bipti's wet black hair there were still spots of henna, like drops of blood." (AHMB.32)

Along with practicing all possible Indian Hindu tradition and customs, the Trinidad Indians have managed to retain their belief in preordination. This is evident when we look at the expression of Bipti's father when she tells him about her uninteresting married life with Raghu, he tries to soothe her by saying.

"Fate, there is nothing we can do about it" (AHMB-15)

The preordination part is still more evident when the narrator records his observation about Bipti's father.

"Fate had brought him from India to the sugar estate, aged him quickly and left him to die in a crumbling mud hut in the swamplands: yet he spoke of fat often and affectionately, as though merely by surviving he had been particularly favoured". (AHMB-15).

Bipti too develops a passive attitude towards fate till the end.

It is Tara, his aunt with whom his family has started live after his father's death, sends Biswas to the Canadian Mission school, and then suddenly decides that he should be made a pundit. So, he is sent to Pundit Jairam to receive his training. Pundit Jairam is a strange man who holds scandalous views and is full of contradictions:

He believed in God, fervently, but claimed it was not necessary for a Hindu to do so. He attacked the custom some families had of putting up a flag after a religious ceremony; but his own front garden was a veritable grove of bamboo poles with red and white pennants in varying stages of decay. He ate no meat but spoke against vegetarianism: when Lord Rama went hunting, did they think it was just for sport?(AHMB-45)

Biswas spends eight months with this eccentric man, doing

"the mechanical side of Jairam's offices"(AHMB-46)

and copying out

"Sanskrit verses, which he couldn't understand". (AHMB-47)

After some time, Biswas is thrown out by Jairam because of a disgraceful act on his part.

In later part of the novel, Naipaul picturises the typical Indian household. The description of the organization of Hanuman House, in the novel, justifies the analogy:

> The organization of the Tulsi House was simple. The daughters and their children swept and washed and cooked and served in the store. The husbands, under Seth's supervision, worked on the Tulsi land, looked after the Tulsi animals, and served in the store. In return they were given food, shelter and a little money; their children were looked after.."(AHMB-95)

Naipaul also describes the joint family in which he grew up as

> "a microcosm of the authoritarian state, where power is all important."(AHMB-96)

However, we cannot forget that the principles on which Hanuman House functions are also the principles, of the traditional extended Indian family system. Naipaul seems to suggest that traditional institutions like the extended family are equally responsible for perpetuating dependence and passivity by suppressing individuality and are major deterrents to the development of personality. Even here one can smell Naipaul's attitude towards Indians who are used to the 'habit of depending,' of which Naipaul has accused Indians of, time and again.

The insularity of the East-Indians is evident in the fact that they have retained the use of Hindi. This turns visible at the time of Raghu's funeral, when Tara, Bipti's sister, has to help out (the Indian Crowd) the family members by translating into Hindi what the photographer says in English. Though the East Indians or Hindu Indian community had adopted insularity, still the intrusion of the alien environment makes one feel its presence. The Trinidad Hindus are forced to change their traditional custom. While performing the final rites of Raghu, they have to bury him instead of cremating. Raghu has to be buried, and later Biswas' own cremation:

"The Cremation, one of the few permitted by the Health Department, was conducted on the banks of a muddy stream and attracted spectators of various races" (AHMB-590)

A House for Mr. Biswas depicts the way Indian Hindus conduct religious ceremonies at the time of birth, marriage, funerals, and the like. There are many examples about Indian customs and traditions, performed on these occasions. It is made clear throughout the novel that most of the Hindu migrant families are very religious as well as traditional. Although those migrants were removed from their native land and culture for many generations, they still perform and practice their religious rituals as per the instructions of their ancestors. Indians are interested in religious ceremonies and; therefore, the way they perform the rituals is perfectly recorded by Naipaul. In the novel we observe ordinary people making their offerings to god through the guidance of Brahmins; religious and high-caste men. The presence of Brahmins while conducting religious ceremonies is very important. The person who conducts a religious ceremony has to feed the Brahmins and reward them when the rituals are over In the novel, Ajodha holds a religious ceremony and,

"he needed Brahmins to feed..." (AHMB 47).

On such occasions; however, ordinary food would not be served, but what is served should be excessively rich food. To be specific, when a religious ceremony is held by the orthodox Tulsi family they:

"Thought appetizing food should be served for religious festivals" (AHMB-203).

Furthermore, a Brahmin is treated with respect and honour. We notice that Mr.Biswas is homeless and is not liked by Ajodha but the opposite is true when he acts as a Brahmin:

"In Tara's house he was respected as a Brahmin and pampered; yet as soon as the ceremony was over and he had taken his gift of money and cloth and left he became once more only a labourer's child" (AHMB 47-8).

Naipaul has demonstrated his knowledge about the Indian traditions and customs and presented them throughout the novel, which is considered as a product of his Hindu sensibility. He explains that each Hindu family has links with a particular pundit, who guides it to perform the rituals and offerings to gods or goddesses. This religious tradition has been inherited from the native Hindu culture of the migrants. In the Hanuman House, for example, Hari is the only pundit, who instructs the Tulsis in their prayers, religious ceremonies, rituals, etc.:

> "Everyone had to seeing Hari as the officiating pundit at religious ceremonies: everyone had been receiving the consecrated foods from him every morning" (AHMB 438).

In this connection, V. S. Naipaul is very critical of the migrant family's belief, say, Tulsi family. In the first place, after the death of Hari, the Tulsis could not find any other pundit to take his position. For instance, when Mrs. Tulsi gets sick, she cannot stand offering rituals with any other pundit. In the second place, Naipaul displays the fact that inhabitants have adopted some traditions from other cultures and religions. He shows the effects of the contagious dominant Christian culture. Mrs. Tulsi's sickness is a case in point that her faith becomes weak, especially after the death of Hari. She seeks help from another religion, Christianity:

> "For every puja Mrs Tulsi tried a different pundit, since no pundit could please her as well as Hari. And no pundit pleasing her, her faith yielded. She sent Sushila to burn candles in the Roman Catholic church; she put a crucifix in her room" (AHMB 551).

In Hinduism also priests are supposed to be scholarly persons, well versed in the scriptural texts. A Brahmin is a person who knows Brahma (the creator in Indian mythology). However, originally, a person becomes a Brahmin not by birth, but by his virtues and actions.

Whenever Naipaul mentions the performance of religious ceremonies, house-blessings, rituals... etc, he refers to the physical cleanliness of the performer or the pundit. According to Hindu religion, the performer has to put a mark of sandalwood on his forehead, to put on sacred thread and white dhoti, in addition to having his head shaved in big ceremonies or occasions. Naipaul describes the performance of the religious rituals and how the migrants are stuck to them. On the other hand, the novelist expresses his dislike of such rituals. This is evident in Mr Biswas, the narrator of the novel, and his son, Anand, the replica of V S Naipaul:

> "Though Anand shared Mr. Biswas's distaste for religious ritual, he was immediately attracted by this ceremony. His cousins had had their heads shaved, they were invested with the sacred thread, told the secret verses" (AHMB 403).

In his book '*V. S. Naipaul; a materialistic reading*' (1988), Selwyn Reginald Cudjoe aptly comments:

"Naipaul, like his father, was forced to reshape some of the epics and other religious texts of his people so as to examine their attitude toward their former home and their present reality. The short story, the prose-tragedy, the novel, and the nonfictional text became means whereby Naipaul could examine his people's reality in their new world."[3]

Religious flag is important in Hindu rituals. It is put up after conducting a religious ceremony. Hindus believe that such flag will keep evil spirits away from their houses. Mr. Biswas criticizes his religious teacher. Jairam, who pretends not to like such a custom while he himself is stuck to it:

> "He (Jairam) attacked the custom some families had of putting up a flag after a religious ceremony; but his own front garden was a veritable grove of bamboo poles with red and white pennants in varying stages and decay" (AHMB 49).

The Indian families are stuck to and have preserved their inherited customs. For instance, when Mrs Tulsi gets sick,

"More and more prayer flags went up in the yard, the white and red pennants ..." (AHMB 551).

Naipaul has presented puja as an important religious ritual in the novel. Religiously, puja is a kind of prayer offered by Hindus to their deities. Many characters in the novel perform it on various occasions such as birth, funerals, taking exams, sickness ...etc. For instance, when Mrs.Tulsi gets sick, she makes offerings and performs pujas to god to help her recover soon:

"She had pujas austere rites aimed at God alone... without feasting and gaiety of the Hanuman house ceremonies" (AHMB 551).

Here, Naipaul's representation of these rituals is sarcastic. When learning to be a pundit,

"Mr Biswas collected marigold and zinnias and oleanders for the morning puja, and sat without religious fervour before the elaborate fire" (AHMB 51-2).

Puja is performed every morning either in a temple or at home in a specific room (pujaghar), where some idols are kept:

"The brothers [Owad and Shekhar] often did the puja in the prayer room" (AHMB 106).

Traditions and customs from birth to death in the Indian Hindu society are well interwoven in the novel. Here, we come to know the manner in which a Indian Hindu migrant family celebrates the birth of its child. Generally, birth celebration is held on the ninth day. Either the birth is abnormal like Mr Biswas`s or normal like his children:

"Bissoondaye .. decided to have a celebration on the ninth day. She invited people from the village and fed them. The pundit came ... the barber brought his drum, and Selochan did the Shiva dance in the Cowpens, his body smeared all over with ash" (AHMB 15).

Holding the celebration on the ninth day may be a local variation, because in the Indian Hindu culture they celebrate a normal birth on the twentieth and the abnormal on the twenty-seventh.

The theme of house-blessing and house-warming contributes to the development of the main theme of the novel. House-blessing is held at the time of house foundation. The owner of the house asks a pundit to perform rituals to god to make the house strong. Shama is very much influenced by such an inherited custom. Therefore, she always nags on Mr Biswas to have a house-blessing ceremony whenever they build a house:

> "You didn't even get a pundit or anything before you plant the first pillar. I not going to live in that house or even step inside it if you don't get Hari to come and bless it" (AHMB 267).

Shama continues insisting on Mr Biswas to have a house-blessing and a shop-blessing when they live in their separate house, given by Mrs Tulsi, in The Chase. Naipaul is sympathetic to the miserable poor condition and inability of Mr. Biswas to conduct a ceremony. Mr. Biswas interrogates Shama:

> "What the hell you think I look like?' he asked in English. 'The Maharajah [king of kings] of the Barrackpore?" (AHMB 152).

On the other hand, house-warming is held when the family enters a new house, cooks to warm it and invites others. For instance, in The Chase, Mr Biswas invites his in-laws to a house-warming ceremony. Mr Biswas is suffering because Tulsi family is too big to feed. He tells Shama that the blessing-ceremony

> "is bad enough as it is. To feed your family on top of all this is really going too damn far" (AHMB 152).

Nonetheless death occurs several times in the novel from the first sentence to the last paragraph. Hindu funeral rituals in the Caribbean are somehow different from those in India due to the effects of the contiguous cultures. For example, the dead body is dressed in a strange way. In the funeral of Mr Biswas's father:

> "He [Raghu] lay in a coffin in the bedroom, dressed in his finest dhoti, jacket and turban, his beads around his neck and down his jacket" (AHMB 29-30).

After that, traditionally in a Hindu funeral, the dead person`s eldest son does the last rites, walking around the coffin and lighting the fire to cremate the body. Here, the novelist shows the domination of the Christian culture, in which the rulers force Hindus, especially the elder generation, to bury the deceased instead of cremating them. For Mr Biswas's father,

> "Cremation was forbidden and Raghu was to be buried" (AHMB 29).

Naipaul points to the fact of their having stayed away from certain kinds of possible confronting situations. They make a few adjustments to the rulers' prevailing culture. This is evident in the young generations, who have rights to perform their funeral rites. Unlike his father, when Mr Biswas dies, his body is cremated:

> "The cremation, one of the few permitted by the Health Department, was conducted on the banks of a muddy stream and attracted spectators of various races" (AHMB 623).

Naipaul also refers to an old Indian evil tradition, sati (In Hindu mythology, Sati, the wife of Dakhsha, could not bear life after the death of her husband. As a result, she threw herself on his funeral pyre and burnt herself to ashes. The name 'Sati was being given to a widow, who commits self-immolation). All the same, traditionally in some parts of India, when the husband dies, the wife has to cremate her body together with her husband's in order to demonstrate her love for him, but not vice versa. Fortunately, it does not exist any longer due to the enlightening movements of the progressive intellectuals. In fact, India owes the abolition of this deplorable practice to the crusading efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the 18th century social reformer. In the novel, one of the old generation ladies is about to commit Sati:

> "Sharma's widow shrieked, fainted, revived and tried to fling herself into the grave. The villagers watched with interest. Some of the knowing whispered about suttee" (AHMB 437).

As a social gesture, people treat Mr Biswas, the orphan, with compassion and pity after the death of his father:

> "As the baby of the family Mr. Biswas was treated by the mourners with honor and sympathy" (AHMB 29).

As a mark of condolence, the dead person's family does not cook for about twelve days. They eat simple food without spices or sugar. The neighbors cooperate and make food for the dead person's family:

> "Because no cooking could be done at their house, they ate at Sadhu's. The food was unsalted and as soon as he began to chew, Mr Biswas felt he was eating raw flesh and the nauseous saliva filled his mouth again" (AHMB 36)

The novelist indicates that Indian Hindu immigrants are not influenced by the Christian culture in certain circumstances. That is to say, when consoling a person, Christians put on black clothes. However, Hindus are not affected by this Christian custom:

> "A son-in-law who lived away died, and his groom came to Hanuman House. where they were distinguished and made glamorous by their mourning clothes of black, white and mauve. This Christian custom did not please everyone" (AHMB192).

On the whole, it can be said that Naipaul is a powerful commentator on the cultures and nations of the modern world and that his ironical and satirical statements do contain an element of truth. The diversity of the overlapping customs and traditions in *A House for Mr. Biswas* expresses Naipaul's views on Indian Hindu migrant community in the Caribbean. We can conclude that those migrants are still stuck to their forefathers' culture and traditions, though they are far away from their mother land, India. They succeeded in establishing a mini India in Trinidad through their way of life. David Ormerod strikingly observes; "Naipaul's world is one of homeless nomadic migrants, making a middle passage from India to the West Indies, thence to England and back again, for, after three hundred years, there is no society or no system of values in which

they can take root. Against this indistinct and dissolving background, the characters try to seize upon something to give permanence and to arrest the flux ..."[4]

It has been said about Naipaul's early novels, that in writing them he was writing-off his debts to his origins, before severing his "umbilical cord" with India. Rather than a writing-off, Naipaul's early novels were the outcome of his attempts to discover his identity and understand his own place in the world. It is Naipaul's "complex fate," that despite his multiple heritage, he Is yet to find his spiritual home, and his writing emanates from his desire to come to terms with his own displacement and homelessness. For Naipaul, at every stage of his literary career, writing is an activity that leads to self discovery. He has himself said: "Most imaginative writers discover themselves, and their world, through their work"[5] Naipaul's quest for his identity has been brilliantly summed up in his words: "I didn't know who I was." It was writing which imposed an order on his experience and lent it coherence. Through an imaginative recreation of the past, he was able to reconcile himself to his present. Just as the house imposed a sense of order on the lives of the Biswases, the process of recording his ancestry helped Naipaul to find himself.

Again we may concluded that Biswas, breaking down and losing his sanity in the coolie lines of Green Vale, is living a situation which is the corner stone of the predicament of a whole society irrespective of the racial origins of its individual members. As C.L.R. James remarks, "Naipaul is an East Indian. Mr.Biswas is an East Indian, but the East Indian has become as West Indian as all the other expatriates"[6]

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Chapter: Six

CONCLUSION

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T S Eliot famously declared "The Noble Prize is a ticket to one's funeral. No one has ever done anything after he got it". V.S.Naipaul, one of the few recent winners who actually deserved the prize, confirms Eliot's kiss-of-death pronouncement. Naipaul hasn't had much to say since winning the noble in 2001, but continues to rant on. He recycles old material and his publisher, eager to cash in on his prestige, follows his wishes(Gregory McName 'World Literature today and its content a world' in Kiskus Reviews 1948 Vol. Issue-1).

One inevitably feels T.S.Eliot's words to be true, as Naipaul has not produced anything much significant than the Indian Trilogy or *A House for Mr.Biswas* after he earned the Noble.

Diasporic literature has now become an important phenomenon like the British and American literature. Writers like V S Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Patrick white, R K Narayan, and so many others have emerged as great writers not only in their respective homelands but also in other English (Speaking) reading countries. They have proved, time and again, that English literature is not an asset of any single nation. Noble Laureate V.S.Naipual being the greatest living writer in English is an added proof.

As a Noble Laureate, V.S.Naipaul, undoubtedly, is one of the most prominent writers, has excelled many of his contemporaries. His fiction, non-fiction and the art of merging fiction and nonfiction together are par-excellence.

His works, both fiction and non-fiction have earned him a bright name all over the literary world. His travelogues, particularly those which are written on India, the homeland of his grandfather are lucid, crisp, simple, touching and very much authentic. No matter how harsh they sound to the Indians, and have surprised Indian sensitive critics. One feels that Naipaul the writer has triumphed over Naipaul the traveller.

In his novels, Naipaul minutely makes his readers feel the effects of the various social, political and cultural movements on his characters. The gap between inner world and external one causes, the post colonial depression which ultimately results in the broken self. Naipaulian characters are exiles, immigrants and expatriates. The characters are disappointed with their unproductive and unbearable past of slavery, dependency and inferiority. Naipaul locates the reasons for their disorientation not in the 'present' but in the dark murkier 'past' and in ambiguous future.

Naipaul born in Trinidad, is a son of Seepersad Naipaul, older brother of Shiva Naipaul, cousin of Neil Bisondath and Vahi Capildeo, his first wife Patricia Hale, and his present wife Nadira Naipaul a former juournalist from Pakistan, all these have published and earned a recognition among the English writing world.

Naipaul insists that his writing transcends any particular ideological outlook, remarking that "to have a political view is to be prejudiced. I don't have a political view." His supporters often perceive him as offering a mordant critique of many left-liberal pieties while his detractors, such as theorist Edward Said and poet Derek Walcott accuse him of being a neo-colonial apologist. He has also excoriated Tony Blair as a "pirate" at the head of "a socialist revolution", a man who was "destroying the idea of civilization in his country" and had created "a plebeian culture". In his book dealing with the influence of Islam on non-Arab Muslims, *Beyond Belief: Regarding Islamic Excursions* among the converted peoples, Naipaul states the following about Islam:

The cruelty of Islamic fundamentalism is that it allows to only one people-the Arabs, the original people of the Prophet-a past, and sacred places, pilgrimages and earth reverences. These sacred Arab places have to be the sacred places of all the converted peoples. Converted peoples have to strip themselves of their past; of converted peoples nothing is required but the purest faith (if such a thing can be arrived at Islam, submission. It is the most uncompromising kind of imperialism.

In March 2002, Salman Rushdie denounced Naipaul for supporting the RSS, VHP and BJP led Indian government, and the anti-Muslim 2002 Gujarat riots: Rushdie said Naipaul was "a fellow traveler of fascism and [he] disgraces the Nobel award". Naipaul has mentioned some negative aspects of Islam in his works, such as nihilism among fundamentalists. He has been quoted describing the bringing down of the Babri Mosque as a "creative passion," and the invasion of Babur in the 16th century as a "mortal wound." He views Vijayanagar, which fell in 1565, as the 'last bastion of native Hindu civilization'. He bitingly condemned Pakistan in *Among the Believers*. Naipaul attracted media controversy with statements about women he made in a May 2011 interview at the Royal Geographic Society, expressing his view that women's writing was inferior to men's, and that there was no female writer whom he would consider his equal. Naipaul stated that women's writing was "quite different", reflecting women's "sentimentality, the narrow view of the world". He had previously criticized leading female Indian authors writing about the legacy of colonialism for the "banality" of their work. Taslima Nasreen gives a befitting response when she calls Naipaul 'a male chauvinistic pig', and adds, "Literary giant? Because he got Noble prize? So many worthless dumbos got Noble prize".

In awarding Naipaul the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Swedish Academy praised his work "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories." The Committee added, *"Naipaul is a modem philosopher carrying*

on the tradition that started originally with Letters, Persanes and Candide. In a vigilant style, which has been deservedly admired, he transforms rage into precision and allows events to speak with their own inherent irony." The Committee also noted Naipaul's affinity with the novelist Joseph Conrad:

Naipaul is Conrad's heir as the annalist of the destinies of empires in the moral sense: what they do to human beings. His authority as a narrator is grounded in the memory of what others have forgotten, the history of the vanquished.

V.S.Naipaul, undoubtedly one of the most prominent writers, has excelled many of his contemporaries. His fiction, non-fiction and the art of merging fiction and non-fiction together are par-excellence. His works, both fiction and non-fiction have earned him a bright name all over the literary world. His travelogues, particularly those which are written on India, the homeland of his grandfather are lucid, touching and authentic. No matter how harsh they sound to the Indians, and they have surprised all Indian sensitive critics. But one feels that Naipaul, the writer, has triumphed over Naipaul the traveller.

Naipaul, in his three splendid travelogues on India, *An Area of Darkness,India: A Wounded Civilization and India: A Million Mutinies Now,* and his autobiographical novel *A House for Mr. Biswas,* discusses about the India's history, culture and civilization at great length. He explores the vast horizon, the in-depth superstitious customs and traditions and prevailing social, economic and political values and demerits. But his descriptions about the country and the people; and the things and ideas associated with it are rather incomplete, unrealistic and prejudiced.

Naipaul begins his description of India, the country of his grandfather, in his first travelogue, *An Area of Darkness* is the result of his first visit to India in 1960. It is the masterpiece of travel - writing. But it has come in for an unwarranted criticism in India. Each of the divisions in the book narrates the

murkier condition of life in India, in the 1960s. The book is a semi-autobiographical as Naipaul narrates his own experiences, knitting them with the prevailing conditions. Naipaul gives us the description of India through the means of the details of the squatters' settlements, the scenes of defecation, chawl life, crowded pavements, hygiene and sanitation, superstition, red-tapism and bureaucratism. Naipaul's experience in the over-crowded Bombay city and his superiority complex leads him to regret for his travel to India.

In the present study, I have tried to perceive Naipaul's 'image of India' from deferent aspects such as Place, History and Culture.

PLACE

When V.S. Naipaul gets down from the ship at Bombay port, he is surprised to see the overcrowded city and its heterogeneous people. As the account of his travelogue progresses steadily, Naipaul describes the condition of Village life of Uttar Pradesh, where from his ancestor migrated to Trinidad. He says everything in India, Particular the rural life is in darkness. In fact, the title of the travelogue is applied to this ancient land. Naipaul's account of his travel consists of many places. He writes about the tragic death of his friend Ramon, an India brought up in Trinidad who recently had died in a car crash. The corpse of Ramon was, buried in a place near London in a befitting manner.

When Naipaul looks at the Indians in many places, his respect for his ancestral country vanishes. The villages in Uttar Pradesh, the horrible scenes in Mahim, Church Gate and others in Bombay baffle him. But it is when he goes to Shankaracharya Hill in Srinagar he is unhappy to see so much dirt accumulated in public places. In his words:

Shankarcharya hill, overlooking the Dal Lake, is one of the beauty spots of Srinagar. It has to be climbed with care, for large areas of its lower slopes are used as latrines by Indian tourists. If you surprise a group of three women

companionably defecating, they will giggle: the shame is yours, for exposing yourself to such a scene (AD.69).

Nor is it much different in Madras where such dirtily scenes are not uncommon. In Madras the Bus station, Near the High Court, has one of the more popular latrines. The travellers arrive and they pass their time, and when they go back they defecate in the gutter. Similarly in Goa, for Goans, as for those of imperial Rome, defecating is a social activity. People squat close to one another and even chatter. The following extract from 'The colonial' of An Area of Darkness. Indicates Naipaul's keen observation of Indian's ignorance of sanitation:

Indians defecate everywhere. They defecate, mostly beside the railway tracks. But they also defecate on the beaches: they defecate on the river banks: They defecate on the streets: they never look for cover. (70)

Indians do not take care of Health. They never cover the excrement. Or do they try to have lavatries. Their idea of this physical act is totally violating the rules of hygiene and sanitation. In this regard, an important point Naipaul says, Indians have to take it from Gandhi who had said that;

By our bad habits we spoil our sacred river bank and furnish excellent breeding grounds for flies.. A small spade is the means of salvation from a great nuisance. Leaving night soil cleaning the nose, or spitting on the road is a in against God as well as humanity, and betrays a sad want of consideration for others. The Man who does not cover his waste deserves a heavy penalty even if he lives in a forest (71A D)

Naipaul regrets that Indians are not even willing to learn anything good from the West. So, he thinks, they will meet a sad end.

Does Delhi make any difference to Naipaul? He says that Delhi is full of rubbish, newly created trenches as latrines. He calls this; 'A City doubly double

unreal', rising suddenly out of the plain: Acres of Seventeenth and eighteenth-century ruins.

When Naipaul leaves Delhi for Srinagar, on the way, he finds many places like Pathankot, Banihal and others. It is on the way to Kashmir, he finds a chemistry lecturer with his Kahsmir, and he finds a chemistry lecturer with his wife as co-passengers. They put him some questions which show the brain drainess of Indian human resource.

He comes to Kashmir, a cool and colourful country side area. It is covered with full of yellow mustard fields, the mountains, snow capped, the milky blue sky and rain bearing clouds. The Blue Mountains, the wide valley, watered fields the beautiful lakes. All attract him every much. He sees the places like Pandrethan and Avaintipur where he finds the Indian earth full of ancient sculpture. The shrines like Akbar's fort of Hari Prabat, Mogul Gardens, and ancient relics of Hindu shrines. The People of Kashmir, Sikhs, Afrida is Butuch is and the other Hindus interest him. In the second part of the Travel writing named Area of Darkness, V.S. Naipaul writes about his experience and familiarity of certain geographical aspects and objects of Kashmir. When he goes to Kashmir, he stays in Hotel Liward a seven-roomed, tousle, and storied boarding cum-lodging. The persons like Mr. Butt, a man All Mohammed cannot speak in English, Mr. Aziz, an illiterate, All Mohammed and Khansah look and an attender impress the traveler.

Besides the beautiful Dal Lake and nearby Nagin lake attracts the visitors. Particularly the Dal Lake which is full of people rich and beautiful engages his intellect, it provides for all. In Naipaul's words Dal provides weeds and mud for vegetable plots, fodder for animals, reeds for that cling and fish, the staple food for many in the nearby countryside's.

Town of Kashmir is Srinagar, capital city of Kashmir. This is lovely and lively tourist place covered by many picturesque lakes, wood lands, historical

buildings and holy shrines. Though the Town is dull during the winter season it is made very colourful:

As complementary as colour was gaiety. The town slept during the winter. The tourists went way, hotels and houseboats closed, and in their dark, small windowed rooms the Kashmir's wrapped themselves in blankets and idled over charcoal braziers until the spring. The spring brought sun and dust and fairs, colour and noise and exposed food. Nearly every fortnight these seemed to be fair in some part of the valley. Each was like the other.

This medieval town was surrounded by many wonders there were many gardens, tomb and mosques of Moghul emperor is Srinagar. There is Hazratabul mosque, Akbar's 16th Century fort in the Dal Lake, God Watched over them all, and the song of Kerbala was heard by them.

HISTORY

In his third visit, V.S. Naipaul comes to know more about Indian History. After he leaves Bombay for Goa, his knowledge of Indian History finds an interesting hue. He lands in Goa and visits the Saint Francis Xavier Church, Mondovi River and Mahatma Gandhi Statue in the Piazza. To the itinerant foreigner the medieval Portuguese city appears something like a new world. The fantastic Arch of the viceroys, a portrait of Vasco da Gama who discovered India, the Image of the Infant Jesus, old Goa all enthuse and attract him. This picturesque city recalls to his mind Aztec goods of Mexico and Hindu Angkor. The Image of Goa, in the words of Naipaul, is very gentle and finely delineated:

Authors view about the Portuguese who ruled the city for more than three centuries and their legacy is very striking:

Haters of Idolatry, haters of all that was not the true of faith, establishers in Goa of the Inquisition and the burning of heretics: levellers of Hindu temples, the Portuguese had created in Goa something of New-world emptiness, like the Spaniards in Mexico. They had created in India something not of India, simplicity,

something where the Indian past had been abolished. And after 450 years all they had left behind in this emptiness and simplicity was their religion, their language (without a literature), their names, a Latin-like colonial population. On this cult, from their cathedral, of the Image of infant Jesus (142 M M).

Then Naipaul comes to Bijapur, the history of the Kings of Bijapur Strikes him strong. He is told that the city Bijapur was ruled by a party of Bahamani state. The barbarous Moslem kings had constructed many huge buildings, masques and other things. It was these Moslem principalities who destroyed the great Vijayanagar Empire in the south.

Equally more impressive is Naipaul's account of the Mysore Maharajas. These Rajas had built the city, many huge and beautiful buildings. Mysore state in many ways was an advanced city. The Maharajas and Ministers were quite often in a peculiar way liberal and forward-looking. Visweswaraiah was the greatest divan of this Mysore state. He was a great engineer. He built a dam across the river Cauvery. And a steel factory at Bhadravati. He made five year plan in the 1920's or 30's, the same man set up the University of Mysore. And Subramanian, the engineer says to the author that, Mysore was the first state where electric power was available. The rulers had a lot of Local Pride.

In Madras, Naipaul visits a gentleman called Palani. He tells how Tamil civilization is pure and good. He was admirer Periyar for his atheism and rationalism loves scientific way of human co-existence. According superstitious way of life came not by Dravidians but by Aryans. His account of ancient Dravidian civilization is very lively.

This Tamil civilization of ours is a very old one. Say, about 5000 years old. The cities of Mohentrogl Daro and Harappa- Moherjo-Daro now in Sind in Pakistan- Harappa- Mohenjo-Daro now in Sind in Pakistan are Dravidian cities. They go back to 5000 BL. That is what historian says. Till about 2000 years back, the society was a casteless society. What happened at that time was that

this foreign civilization came from the north, and they started differentiating among classes. Every, century since then there has been a protest by some Tamil Intellectuals against the caste system. These intellectuals have always in different degrees been resisting rituals and superstition. But they didn't decry the entire system. They said that religion was necessary and god was necessary. But the Aryans were introducing superstitions' (231 M M).

Similarly, Naipaul meets Annadurai who narrates him the anti-Hindu and Brahmin movement of DMK as also the self respect movement of Periyar.

Then when the author goes to Calcutta, he hears much about peasant movement that has now taken a different shape called Communist movement or Naxal Movement. The burnt – out Maoists I had met in Madras had been on the periphery of a much larger peasant movement. This movement had its centre in Bihar and Bengal, almost 1000 miles to the north-east, and it had been at its most active in the late 60's and early 70s. Communism in Bengal had a long history. It was another colonial import, one of the things that had come after the new learning of the 19th century, and the mixed culture. Even now, in the dead British-built city, and almost as an aspect of its death, there were frequent, solemn communist marches through the litter and rubble and hopelessness. Even now, while a communist party ruled in the state, people could still be moved by the party of red flags and revolution (299 M M).

Dipanjan, a PhD holder was deeply involved in this movement. His aim was to fight for the welfare of commonest landless people. In fact, this movement in the rural area was known as peasant movement which later got the name Naxalbari or Naxaliate. The activities of the leaders were to bring and increase awareness in country gentry, to educate and culturize them and to persuade the Jamindar to give them land. In case, the Jamindar did not yield to them, they were killed. About the activities of the movement, Dipanjan, states:

In the evening, after being with students, we would go to the factories and the slums, or take political classes and conduct group discussions. We were slowly learning the classical Marxist political ideas – Marx, Lenin, and Mao, all of them (315 M M).

But the leaders as well as the followers or the workers were very systematic. They had to follow many rules even in case of their matrimonial relations. They were not as rude as the people today think of them as Dipanjan says :

'We had a rule. You must have with you only a lungi, a cloth, a vest or singlet, and a towel. We went to the villages, indentified the huts of the agricultural labourers or poor peasants, and we told them directly why you were there. You started talking immediately about the political aims - seizure of power by the toiling people. We called this Red Guard Action (315).

When Naipaul asks Dipanjan whether they admired Gandhi who also stood for the poor working class with his principal of non-violence, he tells the author:

'Gandhi'?

Of the many ideals of Gandhi Which the Indians didn't accept, ahimsa, non-violence, stands out most'

'The Jains?"

'They're a strange sect. But it's the wrong perspective of India you have, when you mention these religions Buddhism, Jainism, and Gandhi. I point to what happened in Kampuchea, Ceylon, Burma, China – All countries ostensibly under the umbrella of Buddha and Confucious. All these peoples are very violent' (32 M M).

So it drives home an important point that there was a conflict between the ideals and the reality. So this is no doubt, an eternal conflict. The Naxalite Movement which later received a full swing not only in Bengal, and Bihar but also in the southern Andhra Pradesh. And it is still alive today. Its leader was

Charu Mazumdar. He chalked out all the programmes. Its aim, like communist movement was to bring equality between the rich and poor, particularly between the landless and landed. His concern for the poor was admirable and genuine. Debu, a leader who wrote articles for Naxalite movement and whose articles were also read on Reking Radio says of Mazumdar as follows :

"I had tremendous admiration for Charu Mazumdar then, and I have admiration now he was the most intense person I had ever met. And he truly believed in what he spoke about. He put tremendous faith in the young and the new. He truly loved the peasant - much, much more than the love. I felt for them. My love was different. He believed in the Indian peasant. He admired them (338 M M).

When, Naipaul comes to Luknow he meets Rashid who had been familiar to him since 1962. Rashid is later joined by Amir, the son of Raja of Mursidabad. However, Rashid regrets for the loss of the Muslim states and the degeneration of his brethren. This indicates their crisis.

In the chapter 'The Shadow of the Guru', Naipaul discusses the factors what made the people to form Sikhism and to fight against their own fellow human beings. All historical events, Gurunanak, the successors of him, the tragic events and incidents that followed come to his mind as two IAS voluntarily retired officers narrate him the history. First he meets Mr Grutej Singh who rose as an IAS and later resigned to his post to serve his religion. He says how Nanak originated the faith, and how and why his subsequent. Successors built the temple, wrote the holy book and founded the Khalsa. The Officer who is standing for his cause is very religious man. His understanding of life and religion is quite perfect. He states

"The stress on suffering is like this. The world is unhappy place to live in, and unhappiness has to be eliminated. There are only two ways. Either you make

somebody else suffer, or you suffer. And I think a man of God must suffer himself, rather than pass it on to somebody else." (431M M)

Sikhism according to Bhindranwale is a revealed religion and Sikhs are people of the Books. Their Gurus are prophets of their religion. They hold the view that 'irreligiousness is the root cause of all misery.

Gurtej Singh says when the innocent Sikhs were tortured and their gurus were killed by the barbarious Moghuls their gurus founded the Khalasa and revenged against the Moghuls. A recent event that intensified terrorism in Punjab is that due to Nehru and others a sect called Nirahankaris was born in Sikhs whose aim was to reform Sikh community.

But some people like Bhindranwale took them for heretics. Hence, the followers of Bhindranwale under his aegis began to hunt them. This gave birth to insurgency in the Punjab. The officer Gurtej tells the author:

To serve Bhindranwale and the faith, men now went out with the mission of killing Hindus. They stopped busses and killed people in them. Riding pillion on motor-scooters, they gunned down people in the streets. The resulting shock and grief would have conformed the terrorists in their idea of power, would have confirmed them in their fantasy that is was open only to them to act, and that as in same fairy an enchantment lay over everyone else, rendering them passive (423-24 M M)

Bhindranwale used to say Sikhs were like Jews, Muslims and Christians, people of a prophet and a book. He said to BBC correspondents that the Sikhs were subject to such persecution in India they had to 'give a cup of blood' to get a cup of water. Hence, Bhindranwale and his men with their guns were a great threat to the public particularly, to the non-Sikh public. While the innocent people, or police officers or press persons were killed, the Sikh community did not regret, but when the community did not regret, but when the terrorists who were obviously the Sikhs were killed, the Sikhs were worried: Dalip, A reporter

says even the Sikh community did not condemn the mishappenings in the Golden temple:

I used to talk to Sikhs. But by and large Sikhs did not come forward to condemn the happenings in the Golden Temple. They were blaming New Delhi- everything was being done by Delhi. They were never criticizing, Bhindranwale and his men, whenever terrorists were killed the Sikhs were very upset—they spoke of fake encounters. Whenever the terrorists killed the innocent people, I never heard my neighbours expressing regret (479 M M)

Now India is a land of million mutinies. These are supported by many kinds of group, sectarian, religions and regional excesses. The destructive Chauvinism of the Shiva Sena, the tyranny of many kinds of religious fundamentalism, corruptions, racial politics of the south, the pious Marxist. Idleness and nullity of Bengal But these mutinics are essential for the development of many kinds of religious fundamentalism, corruptions, racial politics of the south, the pious Marxist idleness and nullity of Bengal. But these mutinies are essential for the development of India:

Excess was not felt to be excess in India. What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the General intellectual life, and the wholeness and humanism of the values to which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And strange irony mutinies were not to be wished away. They were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of India's growth part of its restoration (518 M M).

CULTURE

V.S. Naipaul, a man who was brought up in an Indian family of Trinidad Knows two cultures, different religions and a variety of customs. In this regard, he is not an orthodox. He states whatever might one culture is, it should be used and venerated until it becomes of no use. In connection with customs, a part of human culture, what Naipaul says is truly admirable:

Customs are to be maintained because they are felt to be ancient. This is continuity enough, it does not need to be supported by a cultivation of the past, and the old, however, hallowed, be it a Gupta image or a string bed, is to be used until it can be used no more (30 A D).

Related to these aspects of culture is Naipaul's father's attachment with his motherland. However Naipaul thinks, India is an area of darkness. His grandfather migrated to central Trinidad. From the central province (UP) of India, is not yet absorbed in the region he has now settled down. The powerful attachment with his motherland still persists in him. Like Gold teeth Nanee, he denied Trinidad. The house he built is in the line of houses built in Uttar Pradesh. In fact, in the Author's words 'he carried his village with him'. A few reassuring relationships, a strip of land, and he could satisfying re-create his native land in Trinidad as if in the vastness of India. Besides, Naipaul discusses about food habits, ceremonies and certain taboos which are of Indian origin observed in his house in Trinidad. He also throws light on racial awareness that Muslims are unreliable people always and dangerous while Hindus are not wise but harmless. Then he writes about the backwardness of Hindus. There are ignorance, superstitious beliefs, illiteracy and uncleanliness in Hinduism. For example, the author says how orthodox his grandmother was, she since they were Brahmins, desired to recite a Katha only under Pipul tree, which was not available anywhere in Trinidad. Except a tree in the Botanical Garden, in the capital city when the authorities permitted to perform a ceremony under the pipul tree, the family of the writer performed the ritual there. Many people who wanted to donate clothes and food donated to Naipaul's in Trinidad. But Naipaul the author is very scientific in nature, so he dislikes the Hindu religious ceremonies. The following extract from part of *An Area of Darkness* reveals his attitude towards his own religion:

To me this luck was touched with fraudulence. I came of a family that abounded with pundits. But I had been born an unbeliever. I took no pleasure in religious ceremonies. They were too long, and the food came only at the end. I

did not understand the language it was as if our elder expected that our understanding would be instinctive and no one explained the prayers or the ritual. One ceremony was like another. The images didn't interest me: I never sought to learn their significance. (32 A D)

Naipaul states that in India everything goes wrong. He writes in India food is one thing, caste is another. Nobody maintains cleanliness and discipline. They practice castism which he hates even though he is Brahmin. He writes 'I have no belief in religious rituals'. However, Naipaul gets a great delectation in good old customs. And he regrets for the disappearance of them like Thomas Hardy a great chronicler of rural England. V.S. Naipaul hates modern customs which exist at the cost of benevolent old systems and ceremonies:

That India reverence for the established and ancient, however awkward, however indefensible, however little understood: it is part of the serious buffoonery of ancient Rome, an aspect of the Roman pietas. I had rejected tradition: yet how can I explain my feeling of outrage when I heard that in Bombay they used candles and electric bulbs for the Diwali festival, and not the rustic day lamps, of immemorial design, which in Trinidad we still used? I had been born an unbeliever. Yet the thought of the decay of the old customs and reverences saddened me.

Naipaul is of the view that, howbeit, India possesses a rich cultural heritage. He writes Indian films, though tedious and disquieting delight many and become hits. Hinduism is such a religion which makes Indians intoxicated and all Indians are God fearing people.

When Naipaul goes to Kashmir, he finds people of many caste, communities and religion. Again he notices people of a same community having varied culture from region to region. It was in Srinagar, he finds many festivals of Muslims and Hindus well arranged. Similarly when he goes to Hasanbad, a Muslim dominated village, with his servant Aziz, he finds a fair well-going on.

In the fair, he beholds many Muslim women in veils in groups of twos and threes and he sees that those people who were poor were not veiled, he finds these people whipping one another, a religious activity. This was called 'a festival of blood'. Both Aziz and the writer discuss about the customs observed by the followers of Mohammad, the prophet, Christ, the saviour and others. Aziz says Christians were closer to Muslims than the Hindus because Christians and Muslims bury their dead. When the author argues that many such men are not true Christians, a nearby standing Medical student explains the difference between Islam and Sikhism. And continues that Muslims slaughter their animals by bleeding them slowly to death, uttering prayers the while but Sikhs strike off animals head at one blow, without prayers. A merchant says these gentlemen that women are veiled so that men would not get excited and think bad things. And that today's Muslims of India are the yesterday Hindus. Naipaul who hates Muslim, for they are crueler, barbarious and inhuman, thinks that if Hindus convert the Muslim to their fold, there will be no memory of Islam.

Naipaul goes on a pilgrimage to Amaranth where he finds the cave of Amaranth, the Eternal Lord, and five foot ice lingam, symbol of Shiva which forms there during the summer months. It reminds him the Delphic oracles of the older world. It had survived because it was of India and Hinduism, which, according to Naipaul, without beginning, without end, scarcely a religion, continued as a repository and living record of man's religious consciousness. This shrine lies in that place where there are snow-clad maintains, icy green lakes, short summer, and treacherous and changing weather. But the large numbers of pilgrims towards Amarnath quite impress the writers.

He notices thousands of pilgrims not only from India and from Hinduism but from foreign lands and from different religions. The slum are, the encrusted lands, the ignorant people and the like give a bad impression to him however, he thinks that 'India, the world's largest slum, had an added attraction: 'Cultural'

humility was sweet, but 'spiritual' humility was sweeter', so happy about the motherland of his ancestors, the author states:

Yet a special joy had been with me throughout the pilgrimage and during all my time in Kashmir. It was the joy of being among mountains: it was the special joy of being among the Himalayas. I felt linked to them: I liked speaking the name. India, the Himalayas: they went together. In so many of the brightly coloured religious pictures in my grandmother's house I had seen these mountains, cones of white against simple, cold blue. They had become part of the India of my fantasy (167 A D).

In the third part of the book, Naipaul writes about the culture, the British Raj in India brought forth. He says the British people in India created a greater love for the language and objects of England. But the position in Trinidad was much different he writes:

Half-way across the world was Trinidad, a truly imperial creation. There people of many races accepted English rule, English institutions and the English language without questioning, Yet England and Englishness, as displayed in India, were absent and to me this remained the peculiar quality of the Raj (199A D).

Though Naipaul is of the opinion that Indian people and things have provided the background for his childhood, yet he considers India to be '*An Area of Darkness*'. He expresses his hatredness towards the people who are slothful, corrupt and unclean. No doubt his descriptions of fantasies and ruins of the nation are made keeping in mind the prolonged foreign rule.

However, some of Naipaul's statements that India is an 'unreal country', 'area of darkness' and more importantly his particularity about the scenes of 'defecation' have angered some section of patriotic and sensitive Indians. Indian critics have censured his in-genuine depiction of India.

Naipaul's second travelogue on India, *India : A Wounded Civilization* (1979) is nothing but the larger and more representational and sensible version

of the first travelogue *An Area of Darkness*. Here too, he calls the land an old equilibrium' but still considers it to be a 'shattered' one. It is once again a semi-autobiographical account as he gives us the details of his ancestors and depicts his own experience of visiting several places and meeting people either by chance or by choice. Though this may be considered to be a more serious attempt, for his search for the identity of his own, he still retains his negative and pessimistic attitude towards India.

Historically, Naipaul divides India between the old India and the modern India. Naipaul has all his respect and love for the human values and tradition upheld by the older generation. In contrast to the old India, he finds the unbeatable wound in the modern India in terms of ignorance, illiteracy, wide-spread poverty, corruption, low standard of living, unhygienic conditions and the fall of the old values. That is the reason why he calls this land a 'wounded civilization'.

The book *India: A Wounded Civilization* is divided into three parts and each part reveals the wounds of this 'wounded civilization' precisely. Naipaul aptly notices the wounds India has received by the long stood foreign rule and external invasions from Muslims to British. Naipaul vividly discusses all the themes he chooses but often fails to accept the bitter realities. He does not penetrate deep into the minds and hearts of the patriotic Indians, and he always tries to meet typical and abnormal people.

Indian critics like, C.D.Narasimhaiah and Darshan Singh Maini hold the view that Naipaul visits India in a mood of belligerency and irreverence with a pay load of prejudice and complexities; and it is not India that is wounded but it is Naipaul's psyche that is wounded.

What happens in the third and probably the final travelogue of Naipaul on India - *India A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) is that he is happy to see the sort of changes India is undergoing. According to him, mutinies, or violent currents

in thought and action are the signs of change and development. So Naipaul comes across many ongoing revolutions here.

Soon after he alights at Bombay, he notices a healthy change in the lives of the down trodden. At inspection, he comes to know certain progress in the condition of the Dalits due to the reforms of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and the movements of the Dalit Panther. But what embarrasses him is the violent vast network of the Shiva Sena, whose aim is to create regionalism. As the author moves south and meets Mr. M.P. Prakash, a minister in Bangalore, he realises the importance of castism and power in Indian politics. In Madras he is told about Periyar and Veeraswami's mutinies against the established orthodox Hinduism. However he is unhappy with the Sikh's rebellion against the Indian government to get a separate state called 'Khalistan'. Even he is contented about the peasant or Naxalite movement in West Bengal, Bihar and Andhra, for socio-economic balance.

Though he recognises the healthy changes that are happening in India, yet he is not happy with the pace of the economic growth and the development, the rapid increase in the population, street politics and communalism. *India: A Million Mutinies Now* undoubtedly displays Naipaul's concern for the land - indeed now 'an area of awakening'. Naipaul states that these mutinies are essential for the reawakening and reconstruction of India.

When one tries to analyse V.S.Naipaul's travelogues on India, how far they are authentic and realistic, one naturally has to bring a comparison and contrast. This certainly allows to measure Naipaul's obsession or genuine concern for India and his prejudiced view of it.

If this is taken as a trend, then V.S.Naipaul's travelogues on India fall below the line. It indicates that he wrote about India to enthuse the Western readers and for the purpose of writing - publishing - earning. But there are some

traveller-writers like, Vikram Seth and Salman Rushdie who think that since the descriptions follow the writer's eye-point, attitude or persona, the tone of the traveller-writer must not be partial or one-sided. While 'A Personal Experience of India' may be an apt subtitle to *An Area of Darkness, India: A Wounded Civilization and India : A Million Mutinies Now,* and may also be described as 'sharply focused, analytical and remote'.

Naipaul feels; *"You know that in India the reaction to my books on India has been tepid. The overall assumption is that I must not be critical of where I come from. This is a good liberal attitude. The advanced countries are expected to product self-analysis, critical literature. The retarded countries are expected to produce literature which praises the existing order. No one in Africa will write, for instance:*

"All this dance and music is jolly good but what about the rest?"

The intellectuals and the liberals have divided the world into two. There is one advanced section where literature and thought endlessly recreate culture in the way Leonard Woolf talked at Cambridge in the 1890s about remaking culture all the time. And then there is another section where you have nothing but praises praises and praises. I can't accept that. When I began to write my first books in a gentle, comic vein I came in for much criticism."

(*An Area of Awakening*: V.S. Naipaul in Conversation with Dileep Padgaonkar, *The Times of India* 18 July 1993).

"My god! Fifty Three years! But it is still selling, especially in India. Perhaps this book, like the others I have written on India, has helped Indians to be more self-critical even if they have not entirely forgiven me... A Wounded Civilization is what we have been talking about. It is about a conquered people. It is the refusal to accept this fact that explains the

instinctive reaction to the book. This was a devastated people who felt smaller and smaller... Lucidity was easier for me because I was from the outside. But let me also say this. Very few Asian countries have thrown up grand men as India has done. Very, very grand men. Both in this century and in the last one... There, again, you have an original Indian response. I told you: there is truly historic and creative development taking place in India".

On the other hand, Naipaul's travelogues on India are partially biased and prejudiced. Naipaul, being burdened by colonial prejudices, poises a harshly critical and lethargic view on the land and the people and finds only dirt and filth everywhere. Naipaul, an expatriate Indian, thriving on an alien sand, trapped in his self prejudice and jaundiced view points, is blind. What abounds in graphic pictures of filth and squalor as though they are sum total of Indian reality. displays just one of the hundred descriptions we find in Naipaul's first travelogue on India, *An Area of Darkness* . No doubt, the image of India he presents in his travelogues is partial and incomplete. It does not show the fuller picture of the land. Most of the things covered in these travelogues appear to be false and illusory. As illusions and appearances often mislead the readers, Naipaul's image of India is severely criticised. But his travelogues on India certainly quicken our awareness of ourselves and lead us to the reawakening and reconstruction of the image of contemporary India.

The Indian Mode of life, the Indian Home is Naipaul's theme in his novel *A House for Mr.Biswas*. Naipaul had in blood and was seeing always around in the Indian colony and in all those sugar Estates where Indians lived and worked. Naipaul may have adopted the method of the West, but the mind of the East moves his highly dramatic in his presentment, that is art, that is style; then what is life? Undoubtedly something else. Here Naipaul remains essentially East, particularly Indian.

Both Seepersad Naipaul and Mr. Biswas, get to learn in their respective offices is not so much the art of faithful reportage, but transforming mundane

events into eye catching, sensational, and fantastic stories. Seepersad Naipaul also shared Mr. Biswas dissatisfaction with the Hindu community which defined him, and his skepticism towards conservative Hinduism and its communal rituals and conventions. Naipaul himself in his 'Prologue to an autobiography' while writing about his father's collection of short stories '*Gurudeva and other Indian Tales* (1943) feels that.

"These stories celebrated Indian village life, and the Hindu rituals that gave grace and completeness to that life, they also celebrated elemental things, the order of the working day, the labours of the rice fields, the lighting of the cooking fire in the half walled gallery of a thatched hut, the preparation and eating of food"(V.S Naipaul, *Finding the Centre;* Two Narratives, Andre Deutsch, London, 1984 p.42.)

In *A House for Mr.Biswas,* Naipaul focuses on the related issue of the identity crisis of the East Indians. The identity of a people rests on their cultural moorings. However, when the very base on which identity anchors itself is destroyed, an acute identity crisis is experienced. The theme of cultural disintegration receives a detailed treatment in *A House for Mr. Biswas* which represents three generations of East Indians. The collapse of the Tulsi Household symbolizes the ultimate breakdown of the Indian community in Trinidad.

On the whole, Naipaul's writings on India have some merits. They demonstrate a certain dedication on the part of the writer, who persistently tries to delve deeper into an unwieldy social and cultural formation. In them, Naipaul characteristically displays his talent for close observation and ability to assimilate carefully what he sees before him. And in bringing these qualities to bear on India over a sufficient period of time and with patience he does convey something of the complexities and diversities of India in an impressive faction- especially in *India A Million Mutinies Now*. On the other hand, Naipaul's writings on India also demonstrate that the kind of observed surface truth that he leans

towards can lead to deeply tenuous and unstudied perceptions. His penchant for cultural essentialist analysis and evaluation results in particularly disturbing political connotation in the Indian context. Naipaul's first book on India, *An Area of Darkness* was the outcome of his first face-to-face encounter with India. India so far had been to him only an idea—an idea that he had inherited in Trinidad. When faced with the actuality of India, its distress and pain affected Naipaul more strongly than its newly won independence. He could not catch the dominant nationalistic spirit of those times and instead wrote a very personal account of his experiences and disappointments. The India of his dreams, the India of his grandfather was lost forever. The diasporic insecurities began to work and soon transformed into an urge for escape and flight. The book represents the first stage in Naipaul's growth as a writer of the Diaspora because, in this book, Naipaul has marked the areas that created unrest in him. He has marked the areas of pain and squalor of futile mimicry and of degeneration. This marking of the areas was the first step. He also marked the co-existence of opposite and incongruous sensibilities in people. I have shown that An Area of Darkness marks his perplexity, his rage and his inability to comprehend the India that meets his eye or its relation to the India of Trinidad.

Amidst the volatile response generated by *An Area of Darkness* certain aspects of Naipaul's sensibility were overlooked. These aspects were the areas wherein Naipaul experienced genuine concern for all that was innocent and uncorrupted in India. Such responses lie scattered throughout the book largely ignored by critics and readers. These areas are the genesis ground for Naipaul's recurrent concerns with India.

Naipaul's second book on India, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, marks the second stage in the progression of his engagement with India. The book is Naipaul's exposition of the problems of India. Here, the areas that Naipaul had marked in *An Area of Darkness* are subjected to extensive scrutiny and the

causes behind the pain and squalor and deficiencies of India are found. Naipaul identifies one major cause that is at the root of all maladies that ail India: a deep rupture was caused in the people's idea of themselves by repeated invasions and conquests. The traditional knowledge and talent was systematically destroyed and with the coming of the British, there occurred the final rupture in the sensibilities of the people. Traditional skills and craftsmanship died out. Alien institutions were forced on the people and traditional institutions were so completely destroyed that even after independence, India could not produce even a fragment of the talent, knowledge and expertise that it had possessed in the past.

But then, Naipaul does not stop with a critique of foreign rule. He goes on to hunt for causes from within the Indian fabric that were responsible for India's predicament and comes up with the following conclusions. The concept of nationhood was totally alien to India as India had so far only known a series of rulers in the past. Gandhi mobilized the people of India to an idea of unity by invoking the age-old Indian concept of dharma. He infused new meaning in the ideals of service and sacrifice in such a way that the struggle for independence cut across caste and class barriers. Independence was won but the idea of self-governance did not reach the masses. The nameless millions, who had walked behind Gandhi, now returned to their individual worlds and personal interests. Gandhi was thus absorbed into Indian symbolism. Gandhianism became ritualised and lost its ideological content. Indian leadership continued to work on the old British patterns; the British institutions continued to function. However, Naipaul does record development at those places, where lie observes a change in the people at the grass-root level. He also sees development in the change that the creation of Industries brought about in the lives of the people. By giving the landless poor an alternative to their unending indebtness and poverty, the industries created people who had a new sense of the self and a new morality. In

this movement at the bottom of the social ladder lay Naipaul's hope for the regeneration of India.

Naipaul's third book on India, *India: A Million Mutinies* Now marks the third stage in Naipaul's engagement with India. In this book Naipaul has analysed and explained the constructions of his own first response to India. The book is a picture gallery of India. Naipaul has observed India at those places from where regeneration and growth have begun. The book follows a pattern: Individuals are observed. their opinions are recorded and placed against those of the earlier generation. In this way Naipaul traces the process of development. Each character is shown in the capacity in which he has negotiated change and invested in development. By holding these characters against their parents or grandparents, Naipaul sees positive change and growth. Naipaul has also traced a steady growth in the lives of Indian women. Throughout the book Naipaul has observed womanhood in various forms and also the subtle ways in which it has begun to assert itself. Naipaul also observes the double burden of the home and the workplace that the new Indian woman has to carry. In India: A Million Mutinies Now. Naipaul has recorded a chain of voices that proclaim that India is on the move. Naipaul's own voice is mainly restricted to the first and last few pages of the book.

These three books on India fall into a pattern and need to be read in relation to the forces at work within Naipaul the person and Naipaul the writer. Had Naipaul limited himself the empirical observations on India, the books could have been read as commentaries on India.

When it comes to *A House for Mr.Biswas*, it can be said that Naipaul is a powerful commentator on Indian culture and way of life. His ironical and satirical statements, that he makes his characters to deliver, contain element of Indian truth. The diversity of the overlapping customs and traditions in *A House for Mr. Biswas* expresses Naipaul's views on Hindu Indian migrant community in

the Caribbean. We can conclude that those migrants are still struck to their forefathers' culture and traditions, though they are far away from their motherland, India, have succeeded in creating its mirror image in the Carribean.

> *So step by step, book by book, though seeking each time only to write another book, I eased myself into knowledge. To write was to learn. Beginning a book, I always felt I was in possession of all the facts about myself: at the end I was always surprised. The book before always turned out to have been written by a man with incomplete knowledge. (FC27-28)*

Naipaul's books on India record the above process, not only in sensibility but also in style.

An Area of Darkness is full of Naipaul's own comments and reactions. The 'I' of the writer is predominant; *India: A Wounded Civilization* changes this. The text is analytical and arguments are conducted on the basis of what meets the eye rather than what strikes the heart. The style and language are also changed accordingly. In *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, this style is embellished to perfection. The text records directly the voices and experiences of the people Naipaul meets. The writer's observations are reduced to bare minimum. The voices speak for themselves and the judgment is left open to the reader. The writer not only steps back but also explains the cause behind his reactions in his earlier books. In this too, the tone is analytical and expository. Thus Naipaul's books on India present a record of the development of his sensibilities and concerns and the corresponding development of his style.

Naipaul's value in our present world is that of a writer who works amidst the fragmented parts of our history. Over a period of time he has brought to focus our past and present through his own unique vision. His is not a static record but one that progresses and grows through each book. His status as a diasporic writer and the problematic fissure it created in his Indian sensibility has recorded for posterity the deep psychological violence caused by colonial

rule and its legacies of confusion, alienation and psychological exile which the world has to continue to live with.

Critics hold divergent views on Naipaul and the number of judgments passed on him are equally numerous. Naipaul continues in spite of those. His only guiding light is his own vision. He has a purpose in what he writes and his being truthful to no vision or idea other than his own makes his enterprise more historically relevant. The past needs to be shaken out of its role of the psychological feel-good resort for bruised reality. Naipaul advocates a critical analysis of the past and for this the past has to be always kept in view while the present is being worked on.

No study on Naipaul and India will be complete without a discussion of the political side of Naipaul's engagement with India. Throughout the course of his encounters with India beginning with An Area of Darkness, Naipaul has refused to be contained within the politically correct boundaries that have, of late, come to be assigned to creative writers and intellectuals. The latest example is the way in which the scholar's and intellectuals have allowed the Narmada issue to fizzle out and the way in which the media has dealt with the intellectual commitment of people like Medha Phatkar and Arundhati Roy. Naipaul's writings and comments on Indian politics are highly charged. By opening a debate on the way we perceive our history and politics, Naipaul has sent across waves of shock among our politicians and journalists who hold a monopoly over political opinion. Pre-independence times are replete with examples of what intellectual commitment can do for a society. Ironically, post-independence times reverberate with the deafening silence of the intellectuals. It is unfortunate that Naipaul's debate is left to the journalists to report and to the politicians who distort it to suit their election propaganda. This is substantiated by the mutilation of Naipaul's comments subsequent to the demolition of the Babri Masjid; calling it an act of balancing of history. Those who are aware of Naipaul's thesis for the marginalized and subjugated people will immediately establish a link between

Naipaul's patience with the resurgence among the marginalized in the form of Dalit rebellions. Naipaul sees this kind of violence as a by-product of the marginalized people's coming to the centre. People who have been cheated and oppressed by established institutions for hundreds of years cannot believe in these institutions all of a sudden. So they strike out, hold on to whatever they can lay their hands on. Following the same pattern, the act of demolition, when seen in isolation as a compulsive act on the part of a people whose culture was systematically destroyed was termed an act of balancing of history" by Naipaul. However, Naipaul is suspicious of Hindu militancy as a systematized form of political ideology and finds it to be mimicry of Islamic fundamentalism.

Naipaul's opinions are his own but they arise out of a sense of commitment. It is a pity that intellectual commitment has been sidelined and no academic debates emerge out of the ideas generated by those few intellectuals who still choose to voice them. Naipaul's opinions and comments are an example of his continuing intellectual commitment. His Changing comments of Hindu nationalism show a progression in the development of his understanding of the use of Hinduism in national politics. Naipaul is a chronicler of our present times. He accepts ideas and ideologies in the form of the present connotations that these have acquired. His books on India should be accepted as diasporic chronicles that attempt to link the past to the present in ways the lead to a progression in his diasporic concerns for India.

Findings

- In these fifty three years between his first visit to India and his recent one, Naipaul and the India he observes have changed in analogous ways. They have changed from the confusions that accompanied independence to the many voices and perspectives of the post colonial.
- Opinions, views, possible solutions are allowed to clash, the interest is more in what has created the change in voice than the tendency of improving

an order.

- Naipaul begins to think that, although India was ruled and exploited by many foreign races and rulers, now it is rapidly flourishing. The beautiful rabi crops, the irrigated lands, the fertile soil and industrial revolution engage his intellect.
- He speaks good about emancipation of women in modern India. Now any woman is as free as man she has moral liberty to do whatever she likes.
- He acknowledges the ongoing minute revolutions which are driving the nation towards progress and prosperity.
- He expresses his liking for the Indian art and architecture, literature and journalism which in their unique way are promoting the country to march ahead.
- Amidst the volatile response generated by *An Area of Darkness* certain aspects of Naipaul's sensibility were overlooked. These aspects were the areas wherein Naipaul experienced genuine concern for all that was innocent and uncorrupted in India. Such responses lie scattered throughout the book largely ignored by critics and readers. These areas are the genesis ground for Naipaul's recurrent concerns with India.
- Naipaul sees this kind of violence as a by-product of the marginalized people's coming to the centre. People who have been cheated and oppressed by established institutions for hundreds of years cannot believe in these institutions all of a sudden. So they strike out, hold on to whatever they can lay their hands on.

Naipaul's writings on India have appeared at regular intervals throughout a long and accomplished career, and my survey does, I hope, convey not only his specific view on India and his 'Image of India' but also the general tenor of his preoccupations and reflections. Naipaul has engaged with a wide variety of

interlinked issues and contexts: the issues range from personal history to the historical determination of culture and society; from colonization to the constitution of post-colonial states: from the complexities of specific racial groups, religious communities, and nationalities, to the broader concerns of human spiritual needs, intellectual life political ideology: from fiction to reality and from fantasy to truth.

This work unearths the maturity in Naipaul's mind in encountering his ancestral land. In his recent writings and interviews he makes it clear that he has come out of the nervousness and confusion and asserts that his quest for the identity of his own is still in motion. By this it is evident that his hunt for his ancestral roots has not ended and will continue, and no one other than Naipaul can tell us the conclusion and the result of the quest for his identity. To conclude one can easily say that Naipaul's **'Image of India'** has not reached its final shape. Hence we can expect many more books on India from him in future, as his search for his own roots is not complete and it will be carried on and on.

Appendix

1. Bibliography
2. Biographical Outline
3. V.S.Naipaul's Interview by Dileep Padgaonkar
4. Dual India-Yeredu Bharatagalu
5. Jnanapeetha Awardee Girish Karnad's opinion about Naipaul
6. My Published Articles
7. Photos

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APPENDIX-II

BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

1932 Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul born at Chaguanas, central Trinidad, on 17 August to Seepersad Naipaul and Bropatie Naipaul (nee Capildeo).

1936 Enters Chaguanas Government School.

1937 Family moves to Port of Spain. (Between 1938 and 1947 Naipaul's family moved several times: to Diego Martin in 1940, to Port of Spain again in 1941; and finally to a house of their own in Nepaul Street, St James, in 1947.) Naipaul transfers to Tranquility Boys' School.

1942 Naipaul wins an exhibition from Tranquility School (he came third in the island) and is given a free place in Queens Royal College.

1943-9 From January 1943 to April 1949, attends Queens Royal College, specializing in French and Spanish. Awarded Trinidad Government Scholarship in 1948.

1950 Returns to Queens Royal College in January as a student teacher. Works briefly in the Registrar-General's Depart-ment in the Red House, Port of Spain. Leaves on 2 August to study English literature at University College, Oxford. Starts writing occasional pieces for the BBC World Service Caribbean Voices.

1953 Is awarded BA (Hons.) in English.

1954 Works briefly in the Cataloguing Department of National Portrait Gallery. Becomes Editor of BBC Caribbean Voices programme.

1955 Marries Patricia Ann Hale.

1956 Revisits Trinidad.

1957 The Mystic Masseur published. Works for ten weeks at a copywriting job with a cement firm.

1958 The Suffrage of Elvira published. The Mystic Masseur awarded John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize. Begins to write reviews for the New Statesman.

1959 Miguel Street published.

1960 Given a three-month fellowship by the government of Trinidad and Tobago to write on the Caribbean. Spends seven months travelling in the West Indies.

1961 A House for Mr Bistvas appears. Awarded the Somerset Maugham Award for Miguel Street.

1962 The Middle Passage published. Leaves on his first visit to India, after being given a Phoenix Trust Award to enable him to write a book on India.

1963 Mr Stone and the Knights Companion published.

1964 An Area of Darkness appears. Awarded Hawthornden Prize for Mr Stone and the Knights Companion.

1965 Becomes Writer-in-residence at Makarere University, Uganda.

1966 Travels to East and Central Africa.

1967 The Mimic Men and A Flag on the Island published.

1968 Awarded W. H. Smith prize for The Mimic Men. Revisits Trinidad.

1969 The Loss of El Dorado appears. Gets Arts Council Grant to travel in the United States and Canada.

1970 Settles in Wiltshire, England.

1971 In a Free State published. Awarded Booker Prize for In a Free State. Travels in India, Mauritius, East Africa and South America. Revisits Trinidad.

1972 The Overcrowded Barracoon published.

1973 Goes to Trinidad to research Christina Gardens killings.

1975 Guerrillas appears. DLitt from University of West Indies, St Augustine Campus. Visits India.

1977 India: A Wounded Civilization published.

1978 Teaches in Wesleyan College, Connecticut, USA.

1979 A Bend in the River appears. Nominated for Booker Prize. Travels in Islamic countries.

1980 The Return of Eva Penin' with 'The Killings in Trinidad' appears. Awarded the Bennet Award.

1981 Among the Believers published. Awarded Hon. Dr Letters from Columbia University, New York

1983 Awarded the Jerusalem Prize. Awarded Hon. Litt.D., Cambridge University.

1984 Finding the Centre published.

1986 Wins the T. S. Eliot Award.

1988 Travels through south-eastem United States. Awarded Hon. D.Litt., London University.

1989 A Turn in the South appears.

1990 India: A Million Mutinies Nay appears. Is knighted. Awarded the Trinity Cross, Trinidad.

1992 Awarded Hon. D.Litt., Oxford University.

1993 Given British Literature Prize.

1994 Naipaul archives opens at the University of Tulsa, Oklahoma, MacFarlin Library. A Way in the World is published.

1995 Visits Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia again.

1996 First wife, Patricia Ann Hale, dies. Marries Nadira Khannum Alvi.

1998 Beyond Belief published.

2001 Noble Prize

2002 Migic Seeds,

2003 Literary Ocassions

2003 Letters between Father and Son

APPENDIX-III

V.S.Naipaul's Interview by Dileep Padgaonkar

Naipaul's reiteration from his superficial and schematic view of Indian history comprises of an Islamic invasion around 1000 AD. For Naipaul, this has vandalized as self-contained essentially Hindu India, followed by an intellectually debilitating Muslim imperialism and an intellectually regenerative British imperialism, the main victims in all of which have been Hindu Indians. The 'Million Mutinies' That are are underway, for Naipaul, un complicatedly look like positive Hindu Movement.

These views have been reasserted in a controversial interview with Dileep Padgaonkar, Published in 'The Time of India' on 23/24 January 1998. Here he has restated his simplistic views of History. He gives little attention to detail, current research, historiogoraphical thinking as was evident in 'India: A Wounded Civilization', His references to Indian historians is unthinkingly dismissive. He absurdly believes them to be Marxist.

Naipaul's Views coincide with those of fundamentalist and semifascist Hindu communalists, is what is alleged against him as he tells :

"I Don't think the people of India have been able to come to terms with that wrecking (of the Islamic invasion around 1000 AD). I don't think they understand what really happened. It's too painful. And I think this BJP movement and that Masjid business is part of a new sense of history, a new idea of what

happened. It might be misguided. It might be wrong to misuse it politically, but I think it is part of a historical process. And to abuse it as fascist is to fail to understand why it finds an answer in so many hearts in India".

This coincidence of views with Hindu communalists has also meant that Naipaul has constantly exacerbated the Indian Muslim's sense of insecurity and aired anti Islamic sentiments.

In this regard I feel it necessary to include the transcript of this interview of Naipaul by Dileep Padgaonkar, necessary in the appendix.

An Area of Awakening:
V.S. Naipaul in Conversation
with Dileep Padgaonkar

It is with some trepidation that I went to meet V.S. Naipaul in his bright, spare and elegant flat in London. This was because of a comment of his I had read several years before. Talking to Michiko Kakutani of The New York Times he had made no secret of his intolerance with those who fail to appreciate his work. "I can't be interested in people who don't like what I write because if you don't like what I write, you're disliking me," he told her. "I can't see a Monkey - you can use a capital M. that's an affectionate word for the generality - reading my work. No, my books aren't read in Trinidad now - drumbeating is a higher activity, a more satisfying activity." Now my own attitude to his work had been ambivalent. I had always admired - and this is putting it mildly - the quality of his prose. It has been praised so often and in such laudable terms that anything I say would be plainly superfluous. Suffice it to state that even his sternest critics regard him as one of the world's foremost living writers.

But then his works, when I first read them, evoked in me feelings of anger and even resentment. Naipaul's account of third world nations and peoples, though pitilessly lucid, lacked, in my youthful eyes, the understanding that empathy alone brings. Not only did Naipaul display no such empathy but he appeared to

be frankly hostile to the people he wrote about. "I do not have the tenderness more secure people can have towards bush people," he told Ms Kakutani. "I feel threatened by them. My attitude and the attitude of people like me is quite different from the people who live outside the bush or who just go camping in the bush on week-ends."

The very titles of his first two books on India - An Area of Darknes and A wounded Civilization - made it clear that he regarded this country as yet another, indeed extravagant, example of decay and decomposition, inertia, violence, fear and generally of intellectual puerility and relentless, moral turpitude. His was a stark vision: one which lacked the flimsiest hope of progress or redemption. "Poise, a sense of proportion and that irony which Mr Naipaul finds must be maintained if one wants to help. Otherwise, criticism is self-indulgence. It must attack, even denounce, but it must not deny human beings their humanity. In An Area of Darkness Mr Naipaul comes dangerously close to doing that," the poet Nissim Ezekiel had written. I was twenty when this article first appeared and its contents had met with my thumping approval.

In later years, however, when the attraction I had felt for ideologies or world views which claimed to explain everything about everything began to fade, Naipaul's books seemed to ring true. In the meanwhile, he, too, had changed. The opening sentence of his novel A Bend in the River (1979) read: "The world is what it is; men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it." From this ominous note of dark despair to the celebration of a million mutinies in India ten years later Naipaul has indeed travelled quite a distance.

My trepidation vanished within minutes of my arrival at his flat. Naipaul is a small, elegantly dressed man who uses gestures sparingly, speaks with a mellifluous Oxbridge accent and treats his Indian visitor with exquisite courtesy. He had once described himself as an "unrepentant snob" but during our

conversation the flashes of the snobbery were few and far between. I noticed one in particular: when he pointedly referred to the brand name and year of the bottle of champagne which he generously opened half-way through our conversation. The conversation turned out to be much like the champagne: "soft and deep. the steel of the backbone will be concealed in a luscious velvety glove," as the Meet et Chaudon is generally described.

Excerpts:

Dileep Padgaonkar : Many expatriate writers are either hostile to their new environment or else are subjugated by it. But you appear to have turned to your advantage your situation. You seem to belong neither here nor there but always elsewhere. And you seem to constantly redefine this "elsewhere." Each day of writing is a day for redefinition, for probing, for questioning....

V.S. Naipaul : Exactly. The reason is that you carry so many ideas in your head. Because of the spread of education and the collapse of empires there has been such a great extension of freedom. This is very new in the world. Education and freedom enable you to get away from concerns about roots and identities. I can carry all my history in my head, all my travels, the first music I heard (Hindi film music of the thirties and the forties), the first language I was exposed to (Bhojpuri Hindi). And I can do all this without any stress in my mind. Nobody really lives in a single culture. Even Africa has been subjected to many, many influences. To talk about a "pure African" culture makes little sense.

Take Indian cooking: it has ingredients from so many cultures. Indeed how can you say "I am an Indian"? India means the world, in a way. People live in several worlds at the same time. But many do not want to admit this. They stick to foolish notions. For example I came across someone in New York who said: "I drink Coca Cola because I am an American." But you don't drink coffee because you are an Arab, or tea because you are a Chinese or chocolate because you are a Mexican. I should be able to say: "I drink Coca Cola because I like Coca Cola."

D.P.: In India we have seen time and again that people have been either aggressive or apologetic about their cultural identity. In to days- India it is difficult to get people to admit that there are several layers to a cultural identity: Hinduism in all its pluralistic splendour, the contribution made by Islam's long presence in the sub-continent the exposure to the West.

V.S.N. The alternatives - traditionalism versus westernism - might be false. There is no either/or because the essence of literature, inquiry and philosophy is a constant examination of oneself and one's world and one's own culture. One hopes to leave the world with different ideas than those given to one when one entered the world. The alternatives proposed in India could lead to brutal clashes. Remember that India was trampled over, fought over. It had destroyed itself by its wars. It was almost at a standstill. You had the invasions and you had the absence of a response to them. There was an absence even of the idea of a people, of a nation defending itself. So there is no reason really for people to be either aggressive or apologetic about all this.

D.P.: Unless of course the perception is that you have to contend with the "other" Some of this is reflected in India: A Million Mutinies

V.S. Naipaul in Conversation with Dlleep Padgaonkar 57 Now. For the past ten or twelve years the feeling in India has burgeoned that Hinduism faces a threat from the mushroom growth of Islamic fundamentalism. It began with the revolution in Iran. The Islamisation process of Pakistan under General Zia exacerbated that feeling. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent rise of Islamic nations in Central Asia, the Salmon Rushdie affair, similar harassment by fundamentalists of liberal Muslim intellectuals in India: all these factors taken together persuaded some forces to argue that a divided Hindu society cannot counteract Islamic fundamentalism V.S.N. I don't see it quite in that way. The things you mentioned are quite superficial. You cannot be a fundamentalist if you want to go and live in America. Ask any Iranian where he

wants to go: it is to America. If that is your goal you cannot be a fundamentalist. I think fundamentalism is a passing phase even in Islam. It is a religion on the defensive. What is happening in India is a new, historical awakening. Gandhi used religion in a way as to marshal people for the independence cause. People who entered the independence movement did it because they felt they would earn individual merit. Today it seems to me that Indians are becoming alive to their history. This has not happened before. Romila Thapar's book on Indian history is a monist attitude to history which in substance says: there is a higher truth behind the invasions, feudalism and all that. The correct truth is the way the invaders looked at their actions. They were conquering, they were subjugating. And they were in a country where people never understood this. Only now are the people beginning to understand that there has been a great vandalising of India. Because of the nature of the conquest and the nature of Hindu society such understanding had eluded Indians before. In pre-industrial India people moved about in small areas unaware of the dimension of the country and without any notion of a community or a nation. People seemed to say: we are all right here. The west may be disastrous. But we are not affected. Now, however, things seem to be changing. What is happening in India is a mighty creative process. Indian intellectuals, who want to be secure in their liberal beliefs, may not understand what is going on, especially if these intellectuals happen to be in the United States. But every other Indian knows precisely what is happening: deep down he knows that a larger response is emerging even if at times this response appears in his eyes to be threatening.

We have to be careful about something else happening in the world. It might be news to you. I recently received a document, the text of a lecture given by some sort of an expert on India who teaches at Trinity College, Cambridge. The lecture was on fundamentalism. In it we are told that Islam was brought to India by traders and merchants and that places of Hindu worship became absorbed into Mohamedan places of worship.

Well, all this is absurd and it is said by a serious scholar.

I don't see the Hindu reaction purely in terms of one fundamentalism pitted against another. The reaction is a much larger response... Mohamedan fundamentalism is essentially negative. a protection against a world it desperately wishes to join. It is a last ditch fight against the world.

But the sense of history that the Hindus are now developing is a new thing. Some Indians speak about a synthetic culture: this is what a defeated people always speak about. The synthesis may be culturally true. But to stress it could also be a form of response to intense persecution. This is sometimes taken to absurd lengths by Nirad Chaudhuri, for instance, who in the midst of the massive vandalism speaks about Hindu aggressiveness. He talks about Al Baruni coming as though peacefully and Hindus reacting to them in an aggressive manner. This is nonsensical.

D.P.: This new sense of history as you call it is being used in India in very marry different ways. Some use It for short-term political gain. But there are those who, well beyond the pale of Hindu political forces, are striving to come to terms with the past. It is revealing, is it not, that leftists in India now think it necessary to quote Vivekananda and the poets of the Bhakti movement. All the same, my worry is that somewhere down the line this search for a sense of history might yet again turn into hostility towards something precious which came to us from the west. the notion of the individual...

V.S.N. This is where the intellectuals have a duty to perform. The duty is the use of the mind. It is not enough for intellectuals to chant their liberal views or to abuse what is happening. To use the mind is to reject the grosser aspects of this vast emotional upsurge.

We all live in a universal civilization, some more than the others. We have our individual particularities. But we are all inhabitated by a universal civilization. It is very hard to go hack.

D.P. When you take a look at Asia you find that self-analysis is notable for its absence. It is difficult to name a single, outstanding essayist in such advanced places as, say, Singapore. India may be somewhat different but not too different.

V.S.N. You know that in India the reaction to my books on India has been tepid. The overall assumption is that I must not be critical of where I come from. This is a good liberal attitude. The advanced countries are expected to product self-analysis, critical literature. The retarded countries are expected to produce literature which praises the existing order. No one in Africa will write, for instance:

"All this dance and music is jolly good but what about the rest?"

The intellectuals and the liberals have divided the world into two. There is one advanced section where literature and thought endlessly recreate culture in the way Leonard Woolf talked at Cambridge in the 1890s about remaking culture all the time. And then there is another section where you have nothing but praises, praises and praises. I can't accept that. When I began to write my first books in a gentle, comic vein I came in for much criticism. And I responded by saying: I don't think any English wilier would ever say, "Mr Dickens writes with disregard for his country. He ridicules England, his background. He must create nice characters." But they will say all this about my work.

D.P. Do not forger that until very, very recently many intellectuals felt that it was their duty to uphold the nation-stale against an onslaught from imperialism, cultural aggression and so on This is one reason why they were not critical about their environment.

V.S.N. That is dangerous, is not it? I came back in 1966 from East Africa. This is five years before Idi Amin and quite a few years before the current obscenities that are going on in say. Kenya. I talked to a weekly newspaper here in England and suggested that this should be written about. And they said: "But how can you make such a suggestion? This would be giving comfort to South

Africa." But I said: "This has nothing to do with South Africa. It had to do with people living in East Africa." Look what has happened.

D.P. Seventy years of the Soviet Union did precisely that. You could not criticise any aspect of the Soviet system because that would mean playing into the hands of the CIA. Entire generations of intellectuals have grown up convinced about this.

V.S.N. It's worse than that. With that kind of lying you create lesser people. I went to Czechoslovakia shortly after the Velvet Revolution. It was impossible to talk to these people who fought the revolution. They had been so censored, they had read so little, they had stopped exercising their mind, they had stopped looking at the world. I talked to East Germans too. They were also intellectually damaged. It will take two or three generations to make them decontaminated.

The achievement in India is that you had two sides of the independence movement as enshrined in Gandhi. One is the political struggle and the other the effort to get rid of the caste system, of reforming society: his south African training. You had two battles: one to cleanse the country of foreign rule and the other to cleanse on self. One looked outward; the other inward. I see no reason why the two cannot be combined. If this is not done then ten years later people will say: "Why did not you tell us? Look at the mess we are in now?"

Mind is mind. Truth is truth.

D.P. A great deal of what you have written about Islamic fundamentalism, intellectual double standards and so forth has subsequently proved to be true.

V.S.N. Do not forget the Caribbean. I mention this because a Dutch edition of The Middle Passage has just come out after thirty two years. It is very pleasing to know that the book is still considered relevant.

D.P. How does it feel to learn that you have been prescient?

V.S.N. It convinces you that nothing matters more than to be truthful. Having your side, having to protect your side: that is so false. Such writing becomes

redundant in five years. The other thing I have learnt is never to he taken in by passing events. A passing event would be, for instance. the Rushdie affair. It is not going to bend affairs. Writing to me is to be truthful, to cast my mind five years hence. If you were to write about England now and you choose to write about John Major would you pause to think: who would be interested in this even two years from now?

D.P. Why have you not written more about western societies?

V.S.N. I have written quite a lot. Have you read Enigma?

D.P. I have.

V.S.N. It is a serious book about England, about England's development in the last thirty years. It is written in an oblique way; but the focus on England is there. I have written about the American south too. My interest, however, began with who I am. I have explored the strands in my upbringing. India, Caribbean, slave society in the background (historically). England.

D.P. Where did the interest in Islamic societies come in all this?

V.S.N. There were Mohamedans among us in Trinidad. The Indian community there had strong bonds. Incidentally, they still do in Guyana. But in Trinidad you had the Negro movement, a racial movement, headed by Eric William. This was in 1956. It brought us closer to the Mohamedans. Please understand that my interest is not in Arab Islam. It is in Islam outside the,Arab world, in countries conquered by the Arabs or influenced by the Arab religion. When my book on these countries was published they wanted an Arab to review it. But what does an Arab know about Malaysia or Pakistan or Iran?

I think that the sense of injustice, the tragic sense of the world which you find in the countries I have mentioned will transmute itself into something very creative.

D.P. Did you feel the sante way about Indian Muslims?

V.S.N. No. We talked of other things. Those people are considerably lost. This is something that their fathers and grandfathers had brought about. They had not thought their ideas through. When lqbal spoke about the need for Islam to have its own society he had not worked out the consequences. He had not considered the possibility of Bosniaisation in the sub-continent.

lqbal maintained that Islam was not a matter of private conscience. What was needed was an Islamic society, an Islamic nation. But how do you create a society of believers? flow about those who were going to be left behind? It is amazing that this thought did not occur to him. I attribute it to the fear of thinking things through.

You find a similar fear about Somalia; send the food, lend the troops, get exciting tilm footage. That is childish thinking. Because the problem of Somalia is profounder than feeding them for five days or five weeks.

D.P. I am led more and more to believe that governments act for the sake of television....

V.S.N. Oh yes! That explains why everything that they have to say is couched in one liners: "We are going to feed you even if it kills you."

D.P. How did you react to the Ayodhya incident?

V.S.N. Not as badly as the others did, I ant afraid. The people who say that there was no temple there are missing the point. Babar, you must understand, had contempt for the country he had conquered. And his building of that mosque was an act of contempt for the country. In Turkey they turned the church of Santa Sophia into a mosque. In Nicosia churches were convened into mosques too. The Spaniards spent many centuries reconquering their land from Muslim invaders. So these things have happened before and elsewhere. In Ayodhya the construction of mosque on a spot regarded as sacred by the conquered population was meant as an insult. It was meant as an insult to an ancient idea, the idea of Ram which was two or three thousand years old.

D.P. The people who climbed on top of these domes and broke them were not bearded people wearing saffron robes and with ash on their foreheads. They were young people clad in jeans and tee-shirrs.

Y.S.N. One needs to understand the passion that took them on top of the domes. The jeans and the tee-shins are superficial. The passion alone is real. You can't dismiss it. You have to try to harness it.

Hitherto in India the thinking has come from the top. I spoke earlier about the state of the country: destitute. trampled upon, crushed. You then had the Bengali renaissance, the thinkers of the 19th century. But all this came from the top. What is happening now is different. The movement is now from below. It has to be dealt with.

D.P. Mind you, the South was not trampled upon as much as the North.

V.S.N. Obviously not. But it was pretty much destroyed if you see what happened in Vijayanagar.

D.P. My colleague, the cartoonist Mr R.K. Lamm and I recently travelled thousands of miles in Maharashtra In many places we found that noses and breasts had been chopped off from the statues of female deities. Quite evidently this was a sign of conquest. The hindutva forces point to this too to stir up emotions. The problem is: how do you prevent these stirred-up emotions front spilling over and creating fresh tensions?

V.S.N. I understand. But it is not enough to abuse them or to use that fashionable word from Europe: fascism. There is a big, historical development going on in India. Wise men should understand it and ensure that it does not remain in the hands of fanatics. Rather they should use it for the intellectual transformation of India.

D.P. This would imply a fairly radical revision of many of the basic assumptions we have made regarding the country the nature of Indian society, the way it is to be governed, its place in the world...

V.S.N. What kind of assumptions?

D.P. One basic assumption flows from the Constitution. When it was adopted, its architect. Dr.Ambedkar, made a speech in which he said in substance: Today we have performed a revolutionary act. We have put not the village, the caste or the community at the centre of the scheme of things but the individual. Schematically speaking, this importance given to the individual is inspired by the American and French revolutions and by the Enlightenment. The feeling now is that the individual will be subjugated if the basis of Indian nationhood is to be Hinduism alone. That is a potential danger.

V.S.N. There are too many people who think like you for that to be realised. Fortunately, this movement in favour of the individual has come as a result of education, of several generations of educated people. There are enough people who are educated, who feel like you, who read your paper and similar papers to fight this. There is a self-regulatory thermostat which should take care of the problem.

D.P. I hope you are right. But the possibility that the individual will be displaced frightens me no end. This is important for all people but especially for the dale's and women. Women In particular. They are the ones who are in many respects in the forefront of progress. They should not be endangered. The Hindutva idea of a woman should not confine her in the "Sita-Savitri" mould.

V.S.N. That is dreadful. And that needs to be fought for many reasons. One of the most important surely is the economic imperative. You can't keep the economy going with such notions. The economic liberalisation should help to counter the trend. I hope liberalisation is moving ahead...

D.P. It is. The atmosphere has clearly changed Attitudes are beginning to change. Indians are rediscovering the entrepreneurial spirit.

V.S.N. That about the modem, moderate elements in the BJP?

D.P. Some fine people who belong to the modernist stream have recently joined the party. This is all to the good. However, I am afraid, that there are not enough of such elements to contain the extremist trends. Time has frozen for them. They want to recreate the golden age which did not exist in tire first place. All the same, that educated people — doctors and engineers for instance — are backing the RIP not because they necessarily subscribe to everything that goes under the name of Hindutva but because they are disillusioned with the Congress system or because they are genuinely worried about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

At any rate, whatever the reasons, Indians are now discussing, admittedly in a chaotic and confused manner, several issues concerning the country. I wonder however whether the debate can be conducted meaningfully if it is couched entirely in a western vocabulary.

V.S.N. Well, perhaps, you need to do what Ananda Coomaraswamy did for Indian aesthetics.

D.P. Or Radhakrishnan for Indian philosophy.

V.S.N. Yes.

D.P. Came to think of it: Your first book on India was published nearly thirty years ago. In 1964.

V.S.N. My god! Thirty years! But it is still selling, especially in India. Perhaps this book, like the others I have written on India, has helped Indians to be more self-critical even if they have not entirely forgiven me.

D.P. I was in my last years of college when I read An Area of Darkness. And I was angry. Then came A Wounded Civilisation. And I flew into a rage again. I told myself How can he bring himself to write about the country in such a horrible way? Finally there is A Million Mutinies. This time I can only say: Now much I have grown up!

V.S.N. A Wounded Civilization is what we have been talking about. It is about a conquered people. It is the refusal to accept this fact that explains the instinctive reaction to the book. This was a devastated people who felt smaller and smaller.

D.P. I must not exaggerate this. But in retrospect your three books on India taken together read in many respects like an autobiography of many of those belonging to my generation.

V.S.N. What a wonderful thing to say.

D.P. I Was angry and hostile, mind you, but with the passage of years I have realised that on many important issues I may not have been lucid enough to admit to myself that things were wrong.

V.S.N. Lucidity was easier for me because I was from the outside. But let me also say this. Very few Asian countries have thrown up grand men as India has done. Very, very grand men. Both in this century and in the last one.

D.P. Well, Gandhi, Tagore, Coomaraswamy, Nehru among others....

V.S.N. Not a bad crop at all. Neither China nor Japan has produced that kind of philosophical intellectuals. In Japan you have had novelists inspired by the French.

D.P. What have you been reading lately?

V.S.N. I read about ten books at a time. But one which has gripped my attention is a book on travels in Africa written in 1795 by a young man who is about to die. It is a classical account. The beginning is boring: descriptions of races, climate, crop productions and so on. Then he talks about his capture by a tribe, his attempts to survive. Three out of four Africans, he says, are slaves: slavery is so much a part of life that it is a measure of money. "Give me two slaves worth of cotton" - that sort of thing. It should be read. It has marked Black Africa to this day maybe.

There are two issues about Black Africa I would like to go into. Why is there no Arab guilt about Black Africa? The Arabs were importing slaves all along. African eunuchs were employed to guard harems. Castration of Black Africans was common practice in Sudan and upper Egypt. And why is there no sense of guilt in Brazil where slaves were imported until 1888? It probably has to do with the intellectual traditions of these countries. A sense of guilt or shock is doubtless linked to analytical abilities...

D.P. In India you do have a sense of guilt. But more than guilt you have a strong sense of atonement. Prayaschitta. You atone for what the caste system has done to the dalirs, what, In more recent times, has happened to the minorities and so on.

V.S.N. There, again, you have an original Indian response. I told you: there is truly historic and creative development taking place in India.

(Published in The Sunday limes of India, July 18, 1993.)

APPENDIX -IV

DUAL INDIA - YERADU BHARATAGALU

DR Nagaraj one of the most eminent scholars of Kannada literature, referring to V.S. Naipaul's India, writes about the existence of 'Dual India' or 'Yeredu Bharata' as it is spelt in Kannada. DR, as he is popularly known, informs us of the two factions who look at India in the ways they perceive (India) it. This put's forth an interesting and debatable concept.

DUAL INDIA - YERADU BHARATAGALU

(Translation Mine)

In the past two centuries there have been Dual or two opinions about the Indian sub-continent. The first one is of anxiety, fear, astonishment and intolerance. The second contains romanticized and idealized India. We find politicns, poets, philophers, researchers, and novelists equally divided among these two factions. Quick mention would be of Naipaul, Who reprents the first (group) faction efficiently there are hardly any intellectual lef in the second group to represent and parallel the thoughts of V.S. Naipaul. But still their ideologies persist. Extended western cult peeps into the temples of saibaba and even even into the ashrams of modern day saints. Raja Raoo represents this group.

There is hardly any respect for the anxious people in this country. Very few dare to admire the one who exposes the filth of their country. Even Gandhi

dismisses chatheria Mao's work 'Mother India', Calling it a mere drain inspector note',. For the anxious lot, the present India is a real one. While tey express their resentment (award) to the political response about the day to day squalor, they express concern towards the significant but terrifying issues. If not checked and curbed, the nation will suffer further more is what they feel. These people have been witnessing the cumbersome facets of the existing and factual India. The facts that they express are so shattering that one hardly believes that owe this country used to be beautiful and glorifying.

We get to see many meanacing incidents which posed a threat even to a scholar like Max muller. He order his disciples n ot to enter into the present India as the 'real' India had seized its existence long back. A sish Nandy has mentioned this legendary story in his work 'Intimate enemy' The people who have kept the flag of what it is fluttering have developed a sense of rejection towards the idea of what 'it is'

If one gets into the question, to what extent the image of India, presentedby the eanxious people, is true, and relevant?

One feels that, there must be a few strings of truth stories, though extreme. For instance, if we observe a few incidents that happen in kiplings 'Kim', they definitely provide evidence to the agreements of the anxious. The incident of the railway station master, who very smarty, issues the tickets to the far off places instead of to the requested destinations of the passengers (In Indian social perspective there is little difference between smart and intelligent). The station master is used to the sort of 'Smartness' as he has been practicing it over period just to decive the poor illiterate villagers. Considering this, we can arrive to a conclusion that what this anxious or people with 'concern' opine is both true and authentic.

If Naipaul's image of India is compared and countrasted with that of our prominent Kannada writers who have dealt with the present India soviet, we

final striking similarities, Naipaul bitterly criticizes half made Indian society, our Kannada writers have converted their experiences into literature with anxiety. Both have same degree of anger towards the Indian attitude in fabricating the modern society.

Naipaul's insights (about the) throw light on the caste system of India which has shattered the (capacity) if imagination and perception capacity of the Indians. This very idea gets its exteusion in many of the modern Kannada works. Worth mentioning is Tejaswi and Lakesh, who share the same ethical discontent and anger towards the prenalent mishaps. 'Avanthi', 'Kubi Mattu Eyala', 'Tabarana Kathe' and the like convey the fierce anger and discontent because of anxiety and concern towards the present developments. This is the depiction of the subtle mind which shun the deception of the romanticized, idealized illogical image of India.

Worshippers India is very much contarary to the present. For them poverty is not at all a problem. They even spiritualise poverty. Raja Rao's India is quite opposite to that of Naipaul's India. For the worshippers to that of Naipaul's India. For the worshippers everything is inventory. Ganges means horripilation, Himalayas mean vibrancy. The soil of this nation is sacred. What ever amount of respect one has about the spirituality of this nation, still cannot bear the heaviness of this inventory image of India.

The present issue is whether these two 'image's, should remain apart. An insider may not agree. The anxious lot who (have stated) that India is lethargic and reluctant to move ahead, should try and treat the issue with lot more intimacy. And get into the reason behind India's telhargy and reluctance. In counsideration with the impact of globalization, they have to assess their anxiety in contrast with the destructive consequences of globalization. Every progressive mind has to check whether there are fundamental elements of Human civilization in what they call lethargic and backward move.

Anxiousness in quite common for the one who stand in the chronicle of presence and look all the things, when their experience is factual. One who have buried themselves in the chronicle of past as quite casually joyful and undergo horripilation and feed that their claim is authentic. Both these people have to realize that, the past and the future collectively will lead us to future. This is necessary for any further perception of India.

The issue has been (Polities) politicized to the extent that even in this scientific era, some have developed a sense of rejection towards indianess. For them, what ever comes from the west in ultimate. On the other side, there are a set of stupid people, for whom, everything that is Indian is heaven like.

This country gets over whelned quick and fast. As sensitive one tries to be, so astonished one gets, leading to the further dissolution people here being to take sides, either of the adorers or of the anxious.

In this regard, literary stalwarts of the Kannada renaissance, the likes of Kuvempu and karanth, appear strong and healthy in their views. They did neither exaggerate the 'anciety' or did they yield to the fals attitude of worship. The strength of the their talent existed in their synchronization of the tempo of the past and rhythem of the present.

* 'Yeradu Bharata', by DR Nagaraj in Samskruthi Kathana Ed., Agrahare Krishnamurthy Kannada Pustaka Pradhikara, Bangalore, 2002, pp.571-573.

Appendix -V

Jnanapeetha Awardee Girish Karnad's opinion about Naipaul

Jnanapeetha awardee writer and actor Girish Karnad seized the opportunity provided to him at the Bombay literary fest to level scores with VS Naipaul for his misinterpretation of the India history. Karnad condemned the very idea of honouring him in such a plat form. Taslima Nasreen supports Girish Karnad by saying "Girish Karnad is right, Naipaul is tone deaf, wrote nothing about Indian music in his books on India. Naipaul is a mean Islamophobe writer".

Jnanapeetha Awardee Girish Karnad's opinion presented at The Bombay Literary Festival, November 12, 2007

Let me make it clear I have nothing against V S Naipaul. I was objecting to the Lifetime Achievement Award that was given to him at the Mumbai LifFest.

I wanted the organisers to explain how they relate themselves to the rabidly anti-Muslim statements made by him including those in an article in the New Yorker and on BBC. How do the organisers justify those statements or do they accept them?

I know Faroukh Dhondy has been defending him all through and the organisers also speak of Naipaul's wife and children being Muslim. I am glad he is a happy father and husband Commenting on his family immediately gets one into tasteless territories.

The temptation has been offered to walk in, but I do not want to talk about it at all. I am only going by what he has written and what I've heard him say in lectures, in life and in meeting.

Prejudice

I am not claiming to be a savant My questions are aimed only at the organisers. My point was very simple, which they tried to obfuscate. It is an Indian award, given at a Mumbai festival.

How can they give it to someone who has attacked a whole section of Indian society) Naipaul is a foreigner, he is a journalist He came here, he felt. he wrote.

I have no grouse at all against him If he is tone deaf to Indian music and cannot respond to the beauties of the Taj Mahal, that is his right He has a right to his thought and I am not censuring him I am just giving my objections as a thinker

How can a Lifetime Achievement Award be given without any explanation of what he has written and said about Muslims and their ancestors? I have heard and seen him spout poison Anyone can find his statements in the archives of the New Yorker where he is writing about the Indian writer.

Even that turns into a tirade against Muslims and how they destroyed Indian culture' This is the white man's view of Indian history, an Orientalist stance and view that is also echoed by the RSS.

Naipaul writing is vibrant, but a lot of his thought though it sounds original is something he has just inherited. In the 18th century. musicologist William Jones wrote- look at India. marvellous, pristine the Hindu culture was laid low.. who did it? The Muslim. Naipaul says the same thing.

In all his writings. no one person is being attacked Instead he attacks a whole community and 500 years of Indian history. There is not even an attempt

to understand history. he just holds forth. He should at least struggle to read that history

But Narpaul himself has said he doesn't do any homework He just gets what he wants to get, he doesn't prepare. It is very evident in his writing that he has no sense of history. And this whole anti-Muslim thing reflects ready-made prejudices. He makes the situation yield the answers he wants.

Example

Take, for example, his stand that the Vijayanagara empire was the last bastion of native Hindu Civilisation It was not like that at all. Aliya Rama Raya, the son in law of Krishna Deva Raya was carried in his palanquin into the middle of the battle, to spur his army on.

The elephant dropped him and he was surrounded by Muslim soldiers Someone shouted, don't kill him, he is the king of Vijayanagara. He was taken to the tent of Nizamshah of Ahmednagar who asked him: how did you land up here?

Alga Rama Raya indicted the line on his forehead and said fate. Nizamshah said sorry, and beheaded him There were many personally wrong decisions made around that period, there vras no grand Muslim design of destroying the Hindu kingdom

Aliya Rama Raya's brother Tirumala didn't even try to defend the city. He collected 300 elephants, loaded them with gold and left Hampi. The looting of the city started long before the Muslim army came there.

It was not a great confrontation. The RSS and Naipaul both have taken that entire story and concept from a book called Vijayanagar, A Forgotten Empire written by Robert Sewell in 1900. So I am just saying Naipaul doesn't know what he is talking about

Experience

I was the director of Nehru Centre, in London. in 2002, when I heard his intennew by anchor Nisha Pillar on BBC I was very upset as Naipaul was talking rubbish and he said Muslims have destroyed Indian history and ravished the country

I heard him spout venom against Muslims all through the interview. But I was a government servant there and I was not free to say what I wanted to So when I got to

speak at the fest where he was given a Lifetime Achievement Award. I did my homework and raised all the points that he has been making against Muslims

He is a great master of language and I nave enjoyed his works. I hke his facility, his crispness and lack of pomposity in writing I have read works like that in Kannada. not so much in English. I reaNy enjoyed reading his early novels, especially A House for Mr Biswas

I am not questioning the Nobel Committee's decision to give him the prize. I think he deserves it for his novels, he is a marvellous writer. I am not squabbling about it. However, the timing of his Nobel Prize makes you wonder A friend told me Naipaul wanted it desperately.

He was considered each time, but it kept getting postponed, as the humanism that is required of a Nobel Prize winner was not there in his writings. The Nobel Committee has been accused of giving the prize for other reasons, even in the case of Orhan Pamuk, who is a very good writer.

But when Naipaul got the Nobel the year after 9/11 happened. a lot of Indians saw the connection. Cartoonist Maya Kamat did a cartoon saying "Congratulations Mr Naipaul, at last your anti-Islamic stand has borne fruit" Many of us saw it as a result of his being a nice brown face spouting venom against Muslims.

Mr. Naipaul has received every distinguished award. Naipaul has won virtually every literary award of importance, got Rhys Memorial Prize for his first novel *The Mystic Masseur*, Somerset Maugham Award for his *Miguel Street*. His *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion* and *The Mimic Men* brought him Howthornden Prize and W.H. Smith Award respectively. In 1971 he was given the prestigious Booker Prize for his novel In a Free State. For his collective literary achievements, he received the Knighthood in the 1990 New Years' Honors List. In 1993, he won the first David Cohen British Literature Prize for a life time's achievement as an author. In 2001 after a long wait V.S Naipaul was finally rewarded with the Nobel considering his life time achievement.

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Alok Mishra
Editor-in-Chief

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NAIPAUL'S INDIA: A MILLION MUTINIES

Share

Naipaul's INDIA and MILLION MUTINIES

by – T. H. Basavaraj (February 2017, Vol.III, Issue.XXV)

and probably the final travelogue of Naipaul on India *India : A Million Mutinies now* (1990) he is happy to see the sort of a is undergoing. According to him, mutinies, or violent currents in thought and action are the signs of change and development. comes across many ongoing revolutions here. Soon after he alights at Bombay, he notices a healthy change in the lives of the n. At inspection, he comes to know certain progress in the condition of the Dalits due to the reforms of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and nts of the Dalit Panther. But what embarrasses him is the violent vast network of the Shivasena, whose aim is to create As the author moves south and meets Mr. M.P. Prakash, a minister in Bangalore, he realizes the importance of castism and dian politics. In Madras he is told about perriyar and Veeraswami's mutinies against the established orthodox Hinduism. is unhappy with the Sikh's rebellion against the Indian government to get a separate state called 'Khalistan', Even he is out the peasant or naxalite movement in West Bangal, Bihar and Andhra, for socio-economic balance.

time, V.S. Naipaul comes to India in December 1988 and visits many states in his 14 months-stay, and completes his third, and final travelogue on India. *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, (1990) is the third sequential travelogue of Naipaul on India. Apart ng the accounts of prevalent social, economic and political conditions, he also depicts the opinions of the people whom he ut one thing is clear, Naipaul has idealised these opinions and the book is full of opinions and conversations and nothing more C. Belliappa regarding the nature of the book opines that; "Naipaul adopts entirely a different strategy in this book. Unlike in the ooks on India, he chooses to interview individuals from different professions, backgrounds, religions and states. And what he rely record their answers to his probing questions which are mostly factual in nature and rarely twin to be leading questions. In he lets his subjects speak for themselves and his comments are few and far between. In terms to fictional strategy, he resorts to d only occasionally indulges in 'telling'".[1]

through this book that Naipaul has overcome the nervousness and confusion which he had carried all along with him on his s. As he himself admits in the concluding pages of this book;

I had succeeded in making a kind of return journey, shedding my Indian nerves, abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past.(M.M. 516)

n this book keeping his earlier two books in mind. It is another revision, another re-seeing of what had been wrongly judged in ooks. They seem to be inconclusive. He has not succeeded in bringing the various aspects of India and the life of her people bience of nationally, or even culturally.

at Bombay port and as usual, he notices the crowds and squatters' settlements. He is baffled when he looks at the never ending f men who have stood there to honour Ambedkar, their dead leader. Later he meets Namdev, the leader of Dalit panther in

Each of these leaders of Sena tells him tales about religiosity, theism and castism in India.

oa comes to Bangalore. His visit to M.P. Prakash convinces the harsh reality that is associated with the corrupt Indian politics. comes to Madras and, as we read, he meets Veeraswami, the leader of Anti-Aryan and Brahmin Movement who tells the history civilization. He also narrates him the story of Self-Respect movement started by Periyar. Having realized the South Indian life, to Bengal where he meets Dipanjan and Debu who narrate the stories related to Naxalbari and Communist Movements in the gal, Bihar and Andhra. In Lucknow, Naipaul, as Rashid and Amir tell understands much about Muslim life in India that is beset munal crisis. While in Punjab, two IAS officers Gurtej Singh and Kapur Singh unveil the story of Sikhism in India and Naipaul the tragic life of 'Sant' Bhindranwale.

ue is full of descriptions about conflicts and revolutions that are still underway in India, Naipaul, with his powerful narrative lains us how silent and harsh mutinies are being worked out in India. Naipaul praisingly accepts these changes. Bruce King feels ing to India during a time when others fear the collapse of the Indian central state because of regional, caste and religious ipaul finds signs of vitality and renewal. There is now a new wealth, a new national economy controlled by Indians and not by any people are prosperous and others can hope to improve their conditions. Notions of freedom and self-assertion have moved e to a broader range of society. A notion of India has been restored, after having been lost for centuries, and it is this sense of h is being challenged by further claims of recognition.... Where Naipaul formerly sought a tradition but found decay and chaos, ome to accept that life consists of change and to find interest in the ways that people strive to change their lives for the better. In ven years between his first visit to India and his current one, Naipaul and the India he observes have changed in analogous ways. anged from the confusions that accompanied independence to the many voices and perspectives of the post-colonial".[2]

llion Mutinies Now is more voluminous and less artistic travelogue than the other two travelogues in which he exposes the crisis-stricken modern India. It displays how thousands of both – silent and disturbing events and conflicts are at work for the f life in India. A true picture of hundreds of mutinies is delineated by Naipaul in this travelogue. No doubt, *India: A Million w* holds a mirror to the ongoing turbulences that are underway in 20th century India.

llion Mutinies Now is Naipaul's most authentic work on India, his fore father's homeland. The book is divided into nine e book runs to five hundred and twenty-one pages. The language, diction and style, the mode of narration and the track of events told are very simple but quite convincing and effective. Each of the chapters is a depiction of a variety of mutinies of the They are picturesque and life-like. The mutinies, the men who involved in them and the victims are realistic. They display the statements that India is developing and prospering with its own fluxes and refluxes. The details enshrined here are certainly

es about Sikhism in India. He meets Mr. Gurutej Singh, an LAS officer who resigned his post just only to serve his religion. who too was an IAS officer, due to his political activities, was dismissed. Gurutej served Bhindranwale, the saint. Gurutej tells GuruNanak found the religion and how the successive gurus started a lunger; built the Golden Temple; wrote the 'Granth'; and Khalsa', for the growth and development of Sikhism, a new religion in India.

Naipaul that Sikhs hated Brahmins, hence the new religion came into existence. But the Muslims who were very barbarous hs a good deal and killed a few of their gurus, and many times massacred the Sikhs. As a result, Sikhs were compelled to rists to save themselves. But after the Independence,due to ignorance some Sikhs became militants. Besides, the Government of ged some Sikhs to reform their faith. One sect of them known as Nirankaris. Gurutej says, began to bring some reforms which by the traditional minded Sikhs under the leadership of Bhindranwale. These reasons made the Sikhs fight against one another Government, and thus, terrorism began in Punjab.

said Sikhism is a revealed religion and Sikhs are people of the Book. Their gurus are prophets of their religion. They hold the ligiousness is the root cause of misery. And so later on the Nirankari sect, which was like the Hindu religious reform movement own by Bhindranwale and his followers. Gurutej says to serve their leader, and their faith, men went out with the mission of . They stopped buses and killed the travellers. Later the terrorist activities spread to the Golden Temple and when the army indranwale was killed. In his article 'Genesis of the Sikh Problem in India', Gurutej writes about the cry of Sikhs in . The book is about the isolation of the Sikh faith and ideology from the Hindu, it further explains that Punjab is geographically more a part of Middle East than of India. According to the Sikhs, Braluminism is the great enemy of the Sikhism.

land of million mutinies, due to regional, cultural, religious and socio-political problems and conflicts. The destructive Shivasena the tyranny of the rich, exploitation of the poor, religious fundamentalism are emerging. Corruption, racial politics e pious Marxist idleness and nullity of Bengal are added. But these mutinies are inevitable. Naipaul concludes:

w felt to be excess in India. What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the general intellectual life, ess and humanism of the values to which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And – strange irony – the mutinies were not y. They were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of India's growth, part of its restoration. (M.M. 518)

n Mutinies Now, is Naipaul's last and the gentlest travelogue on India. Nevertheless, it is an excellent piece of work in the listic writing. In the words of Paul Theroux," It is literally the last word on India today, witness within witness, a chain of strates every phase of Indian life... with a truthfulness and a subtlety that are a joy to read. Something like love enters the al feeling for the land and its people".[4] Another critic K.C. Belliappa opines that; " The book indeed is different, for it is free Naipaul's attitudes, and his chief weapons, irony and satire. This is made possible because Naipaul sees India on its own terms. aps still in the process of finding the centre. But it is significant that he has finally made a beginning".[5] *India: A Million* undoubtedly, displays Naipaul's concern for the land – indeed now 'an area of awakening'.

S

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the Author:

is an assistant professor at S.S.A.S.G.F.G College, Hosapete, Karnataka. He has been producing quality research papers

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A: A WOUNDED CIVILIZATION BY V. S NAIPAUL

Share

Naipaul's India and Wounded Civilization

by – T H Basvaraj (published in February 2017, Vol.III Issue.XXV)

cond travelogue on India, India : A Wounded Civilization (1979) is nothing but the larger and more representational and sensible he first travelogue An Area of Darkness. Here too, he calls the land 'an old equilibruim' but still considers it to be a 'shattered' ce again a semi-autobiographical account as he gives us the details of his ancestors and depicts his own experience of visiting es and meeting people either by chance or by choice. Though this may be considered to be a more serious attempt, for his search ity of his own, he still retains his negative and pessimistic attitude towards India. Historically, Naipaul divides India between the d the modern India. Naipaul as all his respect and love for the human values and tradition upheld by the older generation. In he old India, he finds the unhealable wound in the modern India in terms of ignorance, illiteracy, wide-spread poverty, corruption, l of living, unhygienic conditions and the fall of the old values. That is the reason why he calls this land a 'wounded civilization'.

dia : A Wounded Civilization is handy and it is divided into three parts, namely. 'A Wounded Civilization', 'A New Claim on the Not Ideas, but Obsessions'. There are two chapters in each of the first two parts and four chapters in the third part.

first lines of his foreword to the book Naipaul writes about the extreme climatic conditions. He opines by seeing the fellow e airport that India is again at the periphery of Gulf or Arabian world as it had been in the 8th century. He even feels that India ince the Arab incursion. But in reality India has neither shrunk nor it is in the verge of shrinking, it has continuously sailed and ng all the obstacles and it will in future sail and sail. He gives stress to the point of the advent of the foreigners and the Indian swer those conquests.

on was so little equipped to cope with the outside world; no country was so easily raided and plundered, and learned so little sters. (IWC-7)

xposes his intentions to lay emphasis on the facts responsible for the present Indian situation and their consequences. He in his rtistic language gives the description of the men and sights he at first sees immediately after landing in India (Bombay). He gives ption of a Muslim whose surname being Qureshi had entered the Indian Administrative Services. This seems unique to Naipaul, aders feel that it is unnecessary to mention and Naipaul foolishly has made it worth mentioning.

utset, as if frankly, he writes that;

ne a difficult country. It isn't my home and cannot be my home; and yet I cannot reject it or be indifferent to it; I cannot travel ights. I am at once too close and too far. (IWC-8)

nfusion is exposed here in his own words. He is in dilemma and is not able to decide anything certainly and whether to consider home or not. But C.D.Narasimhaiah remarks; "Presumably, on re-reading his own type script before publication he may have hat in the interest of artistic truth he would do well to throw in a complimentary remark here and there, as for example, 'India is ry. And yet I can't be indifferent'. The reluctance to be indifferent is dictated not by sentimental or altruistic considerations but shamed opportunism – without — Areas of Darkness, Wounded Civilization ... Mr. Naipaul's occupation is gone. What, if not overwhelming compulsion, behind his writing? Most assuredly, not to apply the healing touch to the ills of contemporary ter's responsibility to his fellowmen – the entire corpus of Naipaul's work gives the life to it".2

ne feel itching is his feeling that:

rs had been enough to wash me clean of many Indian religious attitudes: and without these attitudes the distress of India was t insupportable. (IWC-9)

Naipaul has failed to recognize the sacredness and the virtues of the Indian religion and thus he has considered Indian religion .D.Narasimhaiah reacting to this attitude of Naipaul says; "I had not thought that religion was such a filthy thing that he could n relief while what he really needs to do is to expiate a pettiness. He is not in need of reminding that washing will not clean more than it did poor Lady Macbeth. Was he unaware of the irony of such a remark what with its unmistakably Shakespearean images of 'wash' and 'clean' convey?"3 Naipaul, being a stranger in India, calls the customs and traditions of India as strange these things have raised many difficulties to him. It was very hard for him to get rid of these things even after his return to he refers to his first visit to India. Yet he agrees that the things were changing rapidly.

about the Emergency declared by Mrs.Gandhi the then Prime Minister of India, he states that his book is not only –

out India – even an inquiry about the Emergency -has quickly to go beyond the political. It has to be an inquiry about Indian s to be an inquiry about the civilization itself, as it is.(IWC-9)

onsidered to be the objective of the book. He ironically speaks about the Aryan system of sacrifice and mentions about the ed in his own household, though it had been already a century since their migration. In the concluding lines to his foreword he ough he is a stranger in India, still the Indian memories are like trapdoors into his bottomless past. Here one can smell his sense present to his past as a means to his quest for the identity of his own.

hes on to the topic of industrialisation. He says that, now because of the rapid industrialisation, development in science and d the steps taken under the Five Year Plans have made India the fourth largest producer of grains in the world. Till the end of

e discusses about the concept of 'Dharma'. Once again he misinterprets it, the concept of Dharma is reality teaches one to be duty and he must worship his duty. One must not interfere in other man's duty until it is forcefully necessary. But Naipaul nold of this concept.

ing lines of the book he pessimistically writes:

> The crisis of India is not political: this is only the view from Delhi. Dictatorship or rule by the army will change s the crisis only economic. These are only aspects of the larger crisis, which is that of a decaying civilization, where only hope swift decay. (IWC 174-175)

his as if India will seize to exist within a short span of time from now. As an artist he must not have grown so pessimistic. Of s a wounded civilization, but Naipaul instead of trying to assume the healing of this wound through his writing tries to harm he already wounded civilization. He tries to pursue everything negatively and writes negatively as some writers write negative that by writing negatively and by creating controversies they can gain popularity. About Naipaul, C.D.Narasimhaiah opines s to me to write for the same reason that many ossified academics publish are else they must perish".4

paul's statement 'only hope lies in further swift decay', Darshan Singh Maini says: "So far as India is concerned, Naipaul to forget that though humiliated in arms, ravaged and torn, over and over again it has managed to remain afloat in the teeth of her dignity and entity. This is because its spiritual buffers are strong enough to absorb all such shocks ... otherwise, the Indian uld have by now gone the way of the death-oriented Mayan civilization, a Dinosaur of history. On the contrary we find in the nt India a willed and determined effort to modernise her dream".5

aul's delineation of India is not accepted by Indians in toto. His depiction of India, either as an 'area of darkness' or 'wounded imperfect. In a sense it is unrealistic. The reasons are crystal clear. Naipaul, an unhappy Trinidad Indian, visits India with a comes to India almost as a mood of irreverence and helplessness. He arrives here with a payload of prejudice and a freight of

ue in his article "The Complex Fate of V.S.Naipaul", D.S.Maini asserts that; "Naipaul appears to have little respect for, and ding of, the vast sociological and psychic changes now under way in India".6

state that it is, due to his lost identity and double alienation, Naipaul writes negatively about India and his own confusion onfused identity has contributed a lot to his negativity.

t must be said that what Naipaul writes about India is not wholly untrue. His assertion that India is oppressed by yoke of d its own limitations are acceptable.

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simhaiah, "Naipaul's Indian Experience Again", in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English, ed., Ayyappa Panikar, Kerala sity Press, Trivandrum, 1981, p. 99

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o the Author:

aj is an assistant professor at S.S.A.S.G.F.G College, Hosapete, Karnataka. He has been producing quality research papers

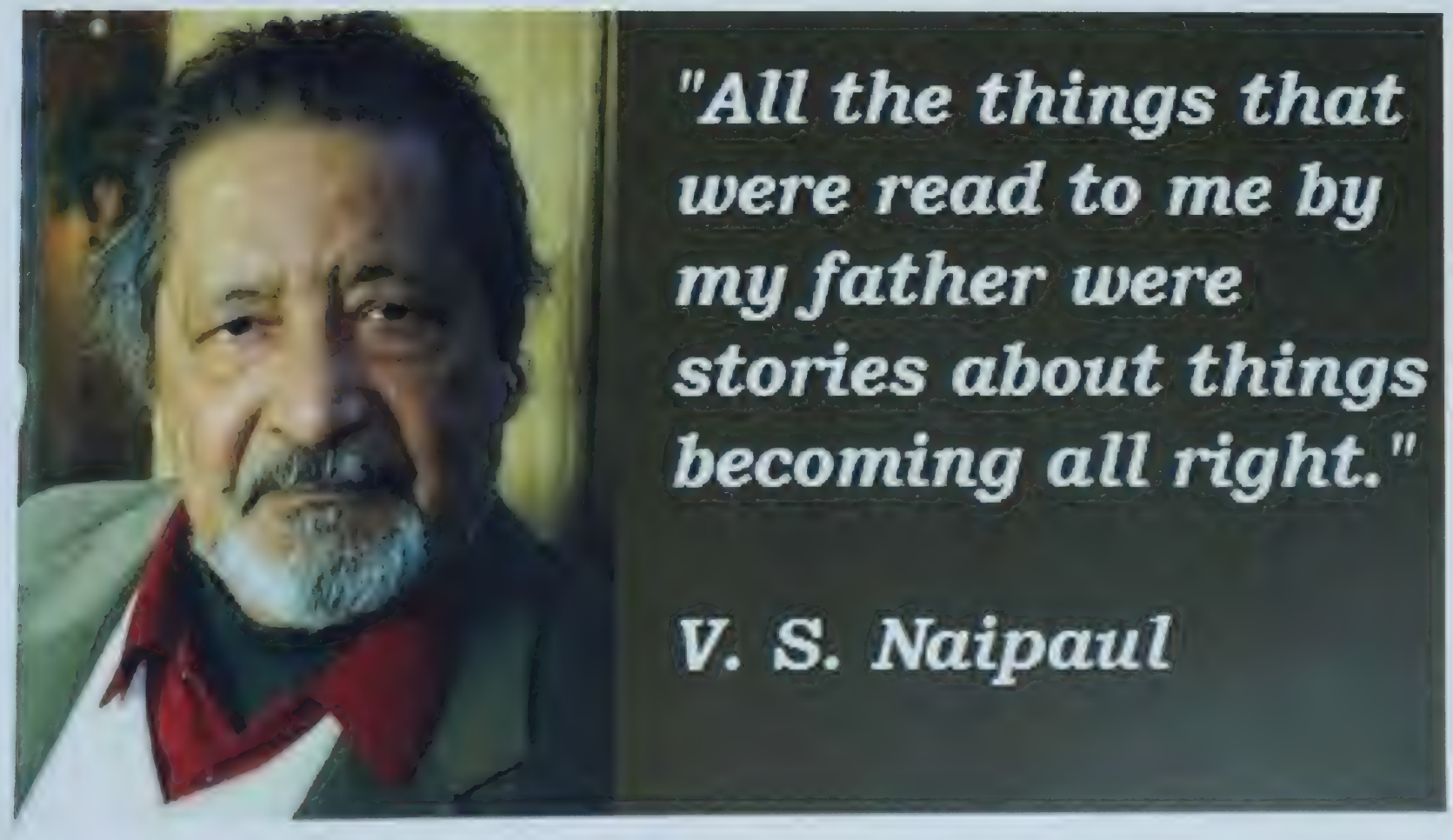
H ARTICLES

C RESEARCH PAPER

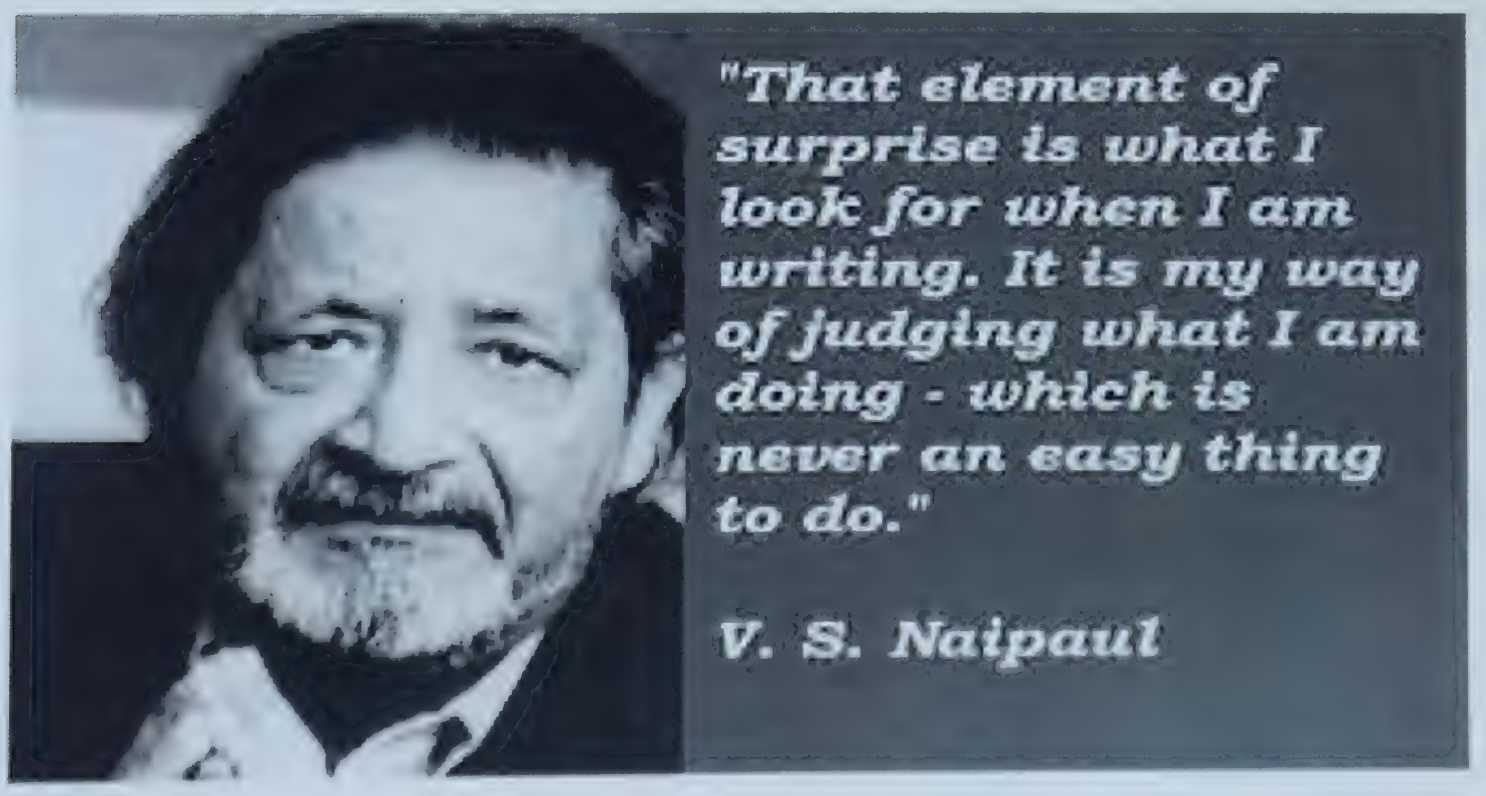
Sir. V.S.Naipaul receiving his Noble Prize from His Majesty King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden at the Stockholm Concert Hall, 10 December 2001

"Most people are not really free. They are confined by the niche in the world that they carve out for themselves. They limit themselves to fewer possibilities by the narrowness of their vision."
V.S. Naipaul

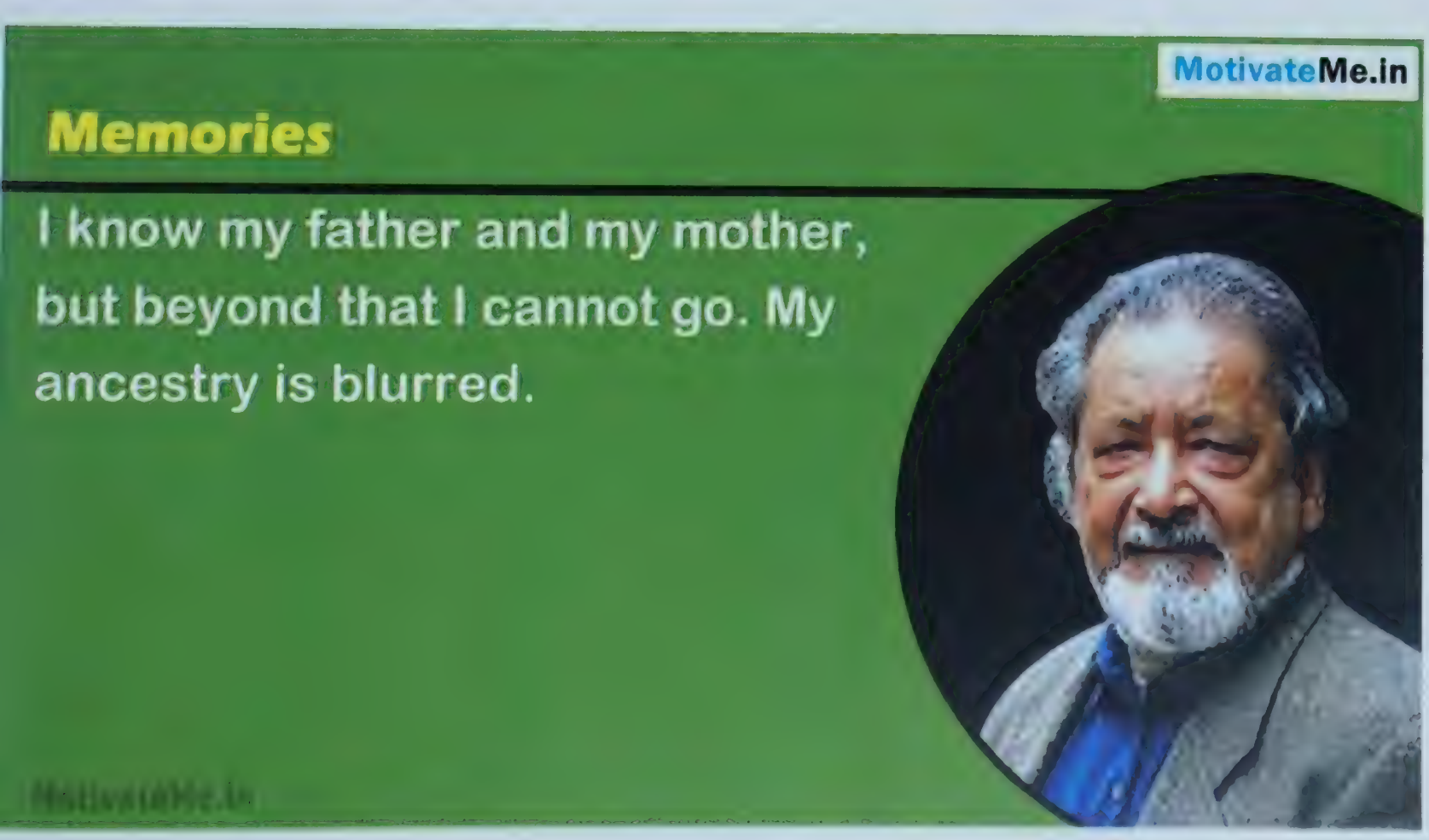
Sir. V.S.Naipaul inaugurates the International Festival of Indian Literature as the then Prime Minister Sri A.B.Vajpayee watches him



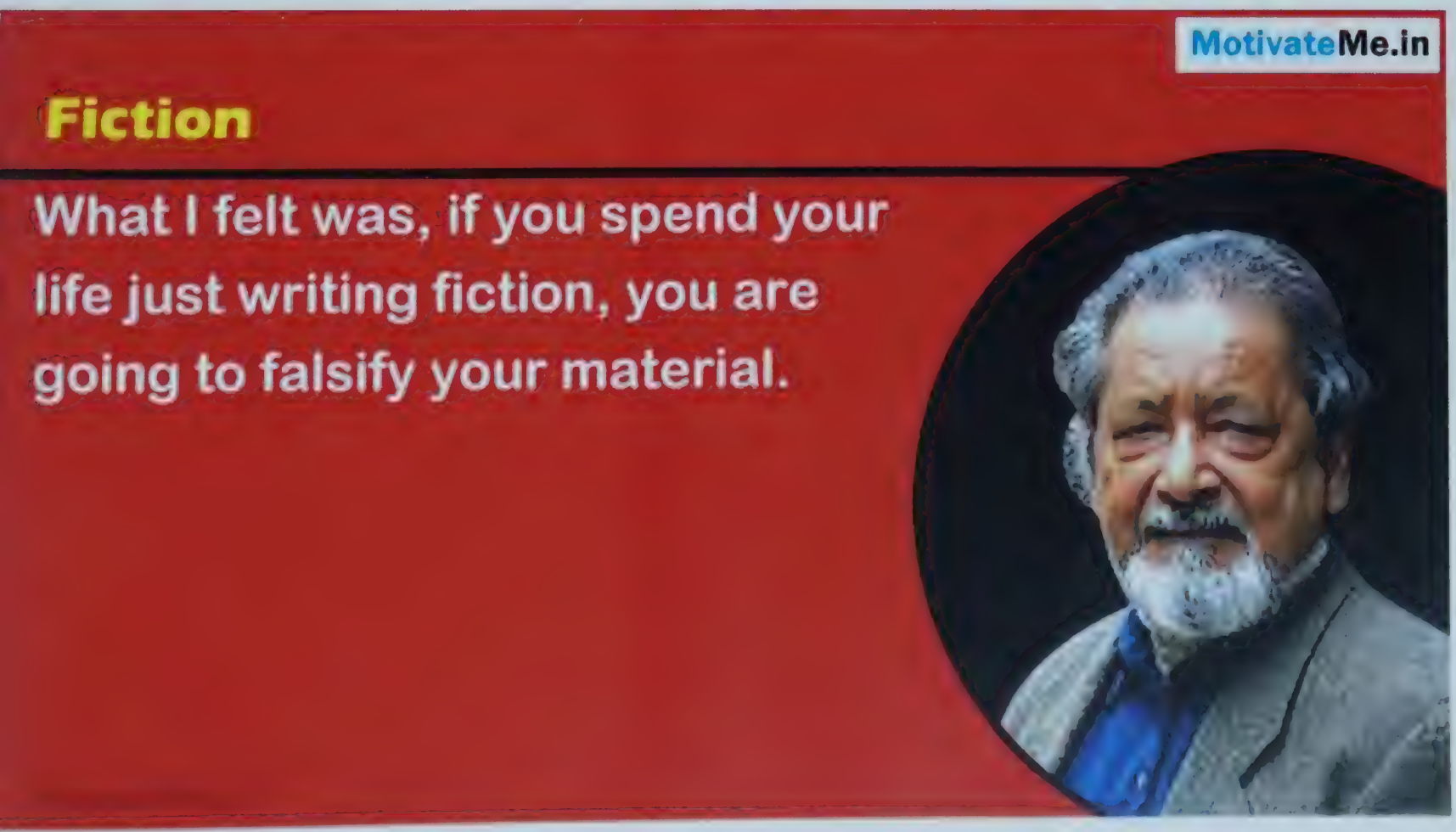
Sir. V.S.Naipaul Receiving Lifetime Achievement Award by Columnist Anil Dharkar at Tata Literature live festival at NCPA on 31 October 2012, Mumbai


"That element of surprise is what I look for when I am writing. It is my way of judging what I am doing - which is never an easy thing to do."
V. S. Naipaul

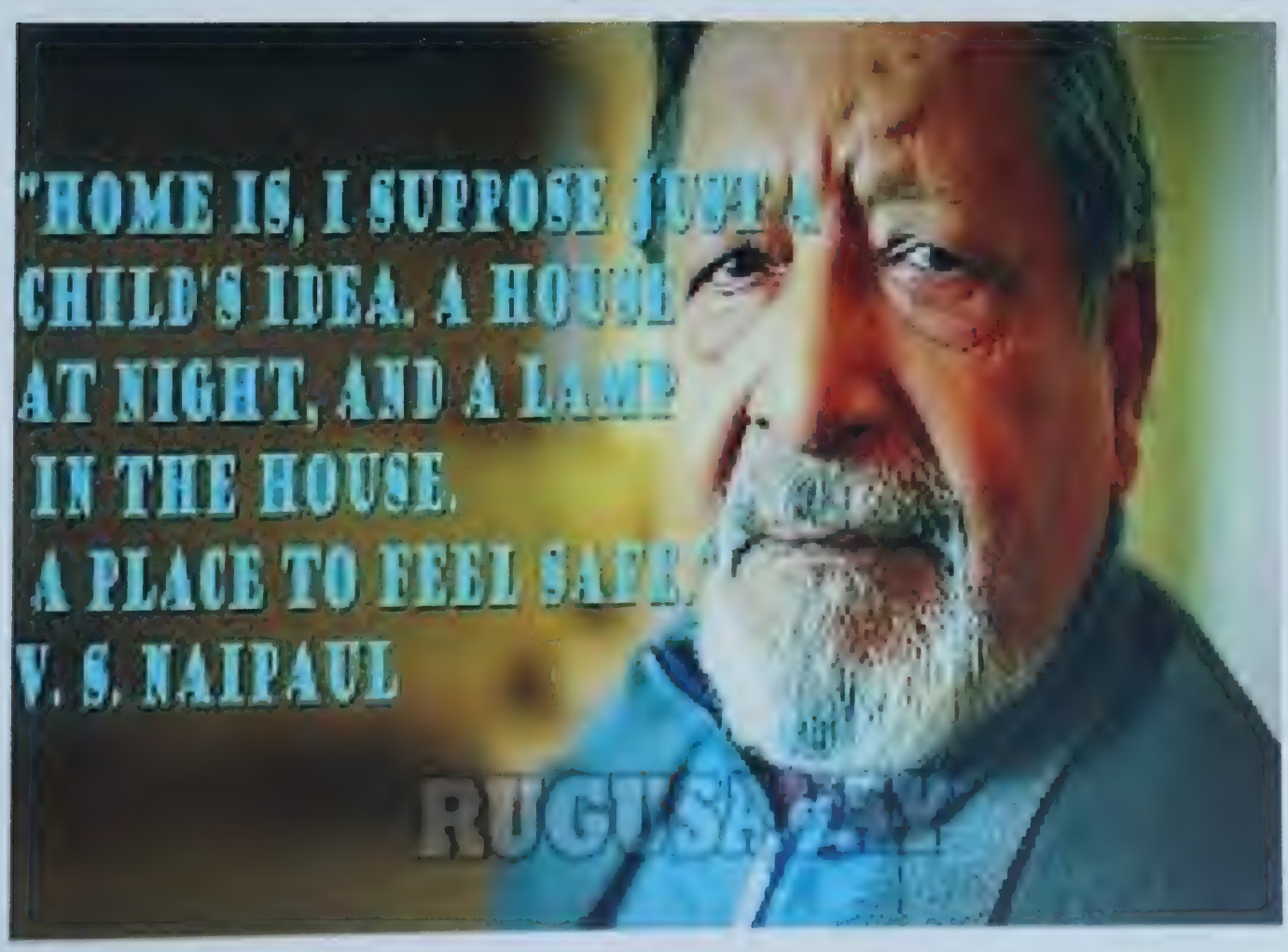
Sir. V.S.Naipaul with his brother Shiva Naipaul Protrait of Seeprasad Naipaul, Naipauls father is visible in the background



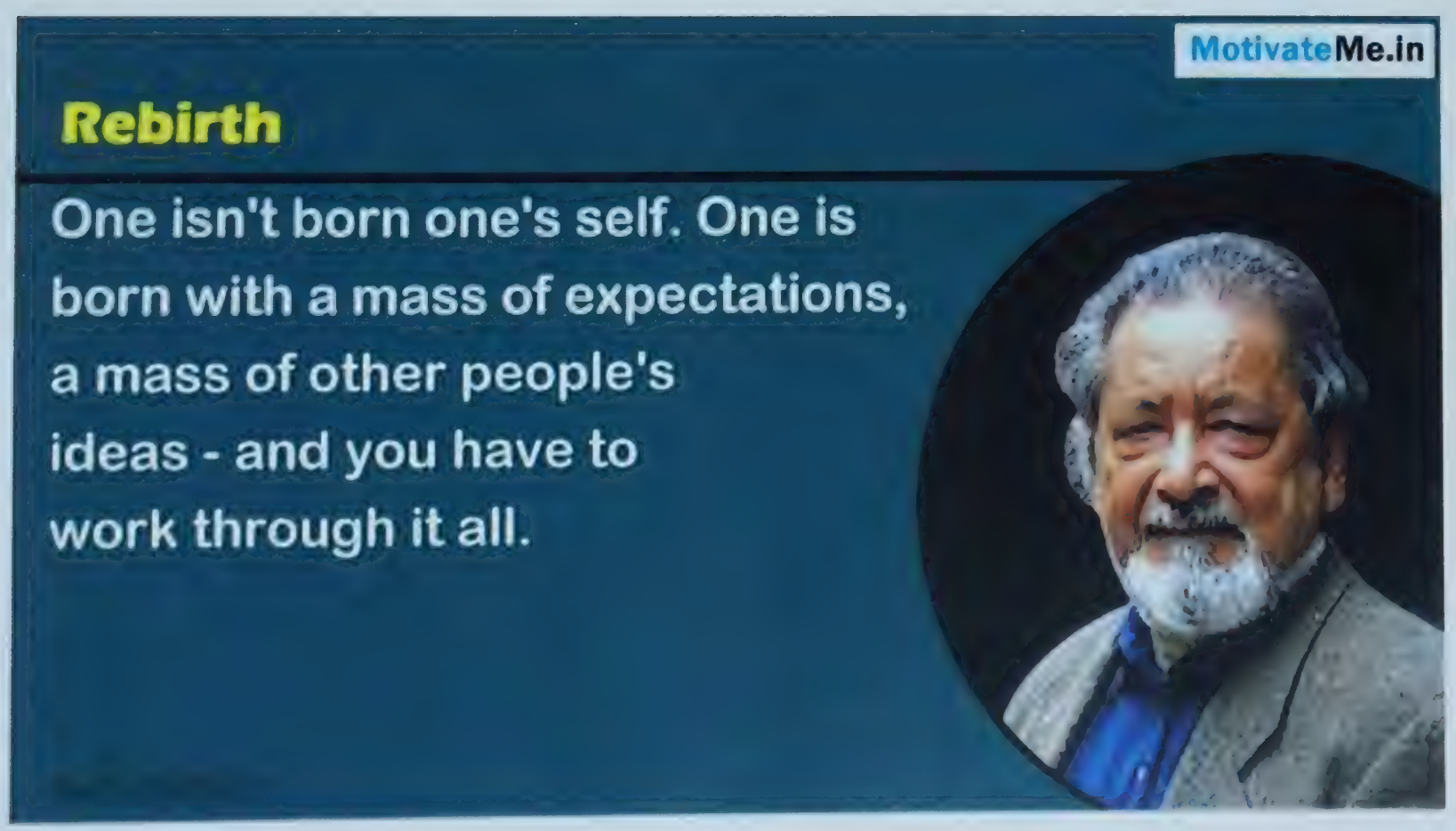
Nobel laureate Sir VS Naipaul in conversation with writer Farrukh Dhondy (not in the picture) after he was given Life Time Achievement award during Tata Literature Live Festival at NCPA on October 31, 2012 in Mumbai, India.



Sir VS Naipaul and his three Women
Patricia Anna Hale, Margaret Murray and Nadira Naipaul



Sir VS Naipaul on his Indian Journey


MotivateMe.in
Rebirth
One isn't born one's self. One is born with a mass of expectations, a mass of other people's ideas - and you have to work through it all.